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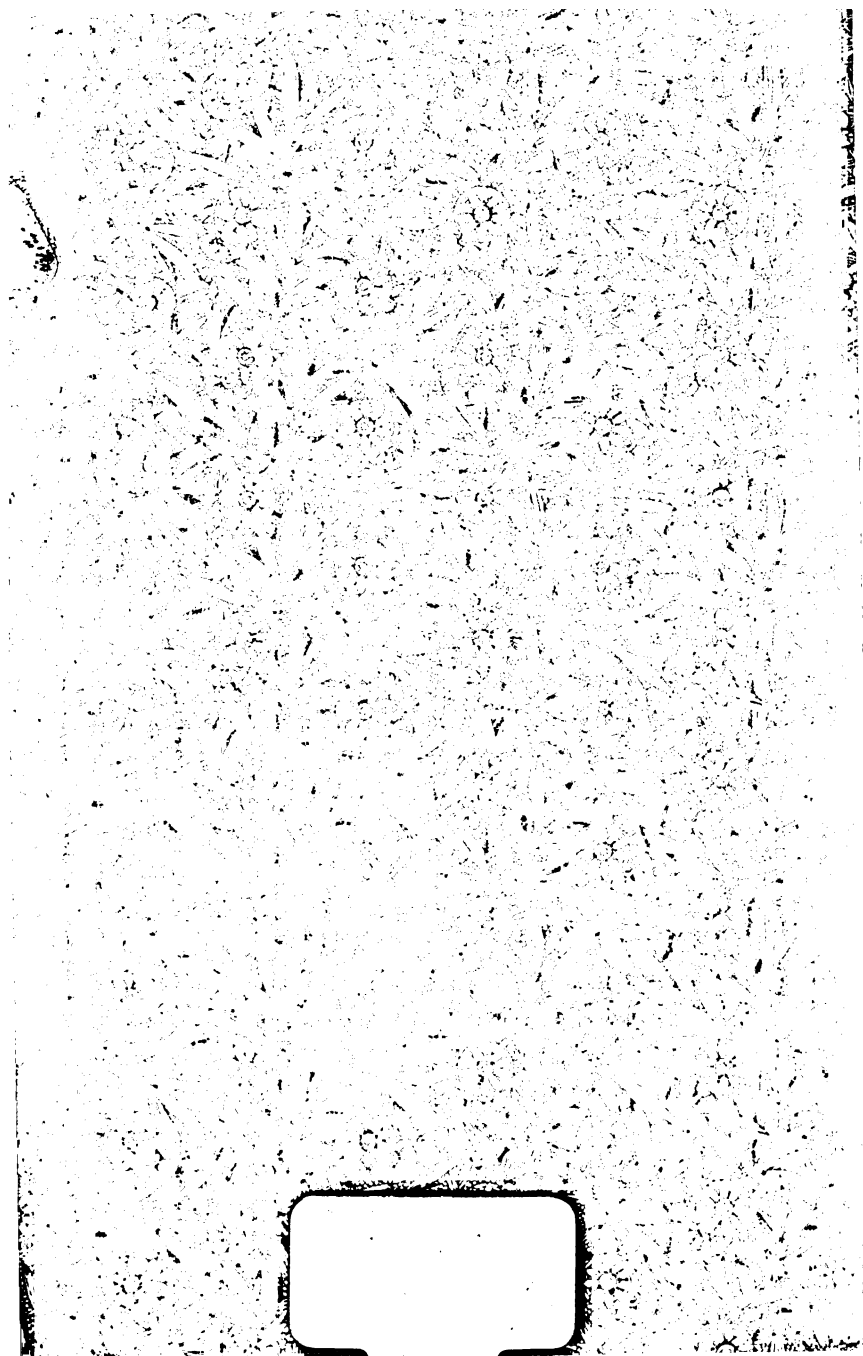
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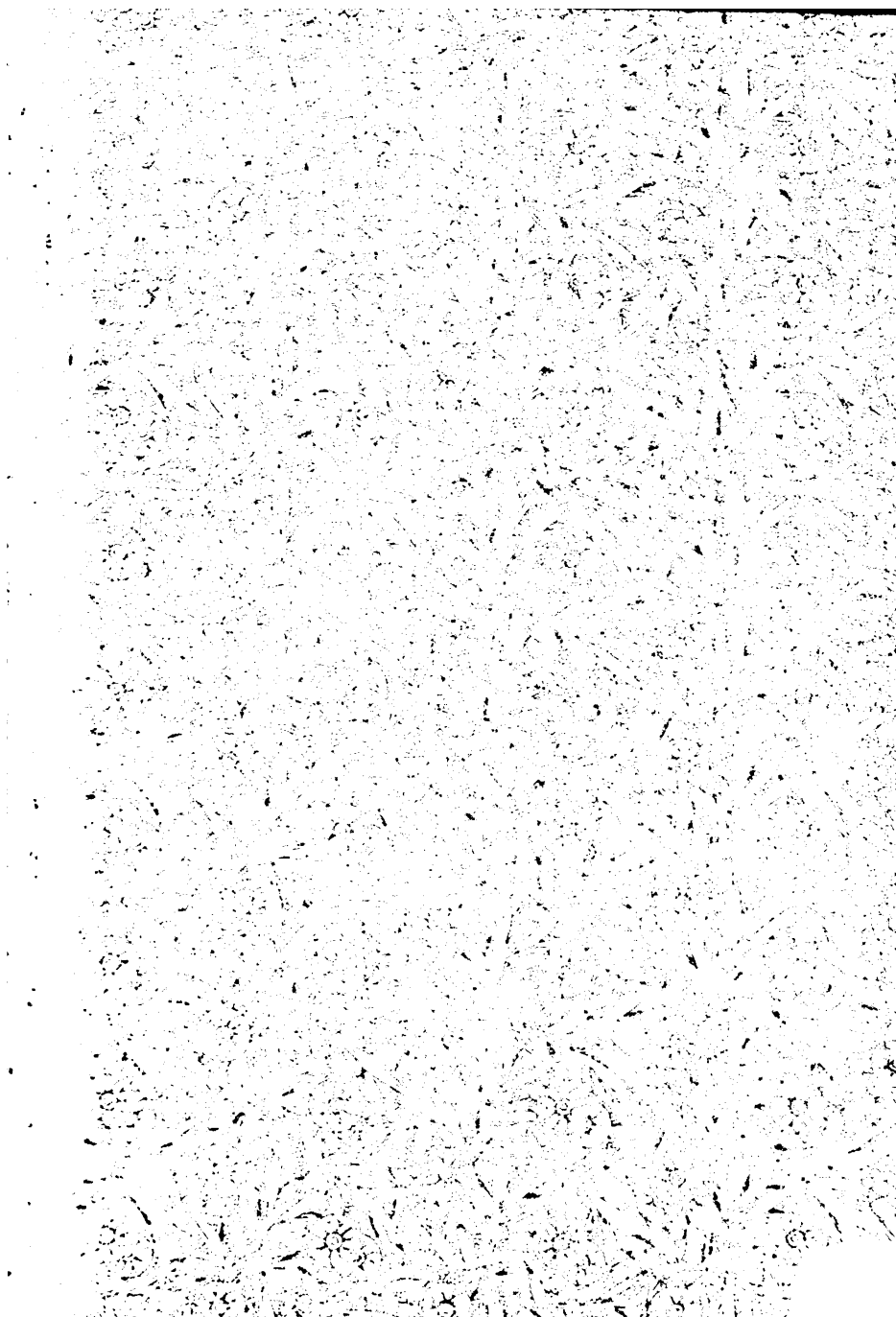
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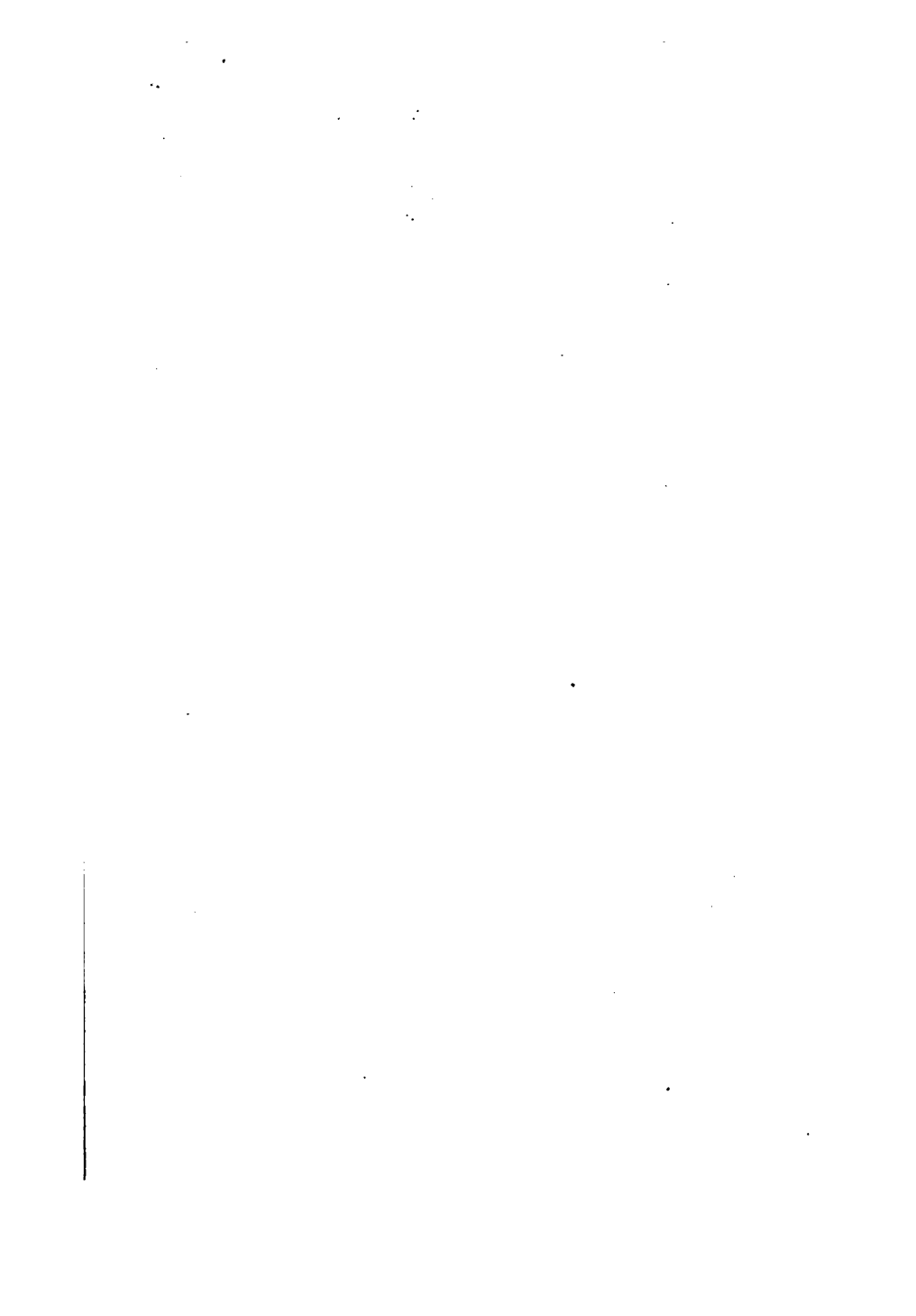






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JOSÉ AND BENJAMIN.



JOSÉ AND BENJAMIN:

A TALE OF

Jerusalem in the Time of the Herods.

BY

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LEIPZIG.

TRANSLATED BY

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PREFACE.

THE following tale was written some years ago by Dr. Delitzsch, of Leipzig, the well-known Oriental scholar. The author's profound acquaintance with old Hebrew literature renders his delineation of the times specially valuable, and it will, we believe, be welcome to many English readers. Dr. Delitzsch has given his sanction to the present translation, and has kindly furnished a number of corrections which have not as yet appeared in any German edition. The following note to the translator will be read with interest, as showing the light in which the author himself regards "José and Benjamin."

"DEAR SIR,—

"You have translated my 'Tale of Jerusalem in the Time of the Herods,' and as

my friend, Dr. Salmond, informs me, from sympathy with its contents and with its author. I am much pleased and feel myself honoured : but I am also grateful, for you are helping to make more widely known a little book which has more individuality than anything that I have written. It is a piece of my own life, reflected in a historic mirror, but written for the glory of God and of His Christ. Let my 'José and Benjamin,' then, wander through England. Here and there the story of youthful friendship will find a lyric echo in some heart. Let those who find the book too sentimental forget the two friends, and fix their attention on the archæology.

"Yours,

"F. DELITZSCH."

INTRODUCTION.

IF we transport ourselves to Zion, or the Upper City of Ancient Jerusalem, and follow the course of the city wall in a westerly direction, before we reach the Zion-gate, outside of which the Church of Zion with the cœnaculum is situated, we come upon a secluded enclosure. Entering, we seem to be carried back to that primeval time when, according to the wisdom of our modern days, humanity had hardly raised itself above the condition of the lower animals. The space is covered with stones, chiefly large blocks, which in places are piled on one another in layers, and serve to separate it from the world outside. A few fig-trees and an old knotted vine suggest an attempt, soon abandoned in despair, to turn this waste of stones into a garden. On the side of the city wall the obstacles in the way of free loco-

motion have been partially removed, but what a spectacle is there presented! The stones have been clumsily built up into dwellings of from six to eight feet in height, for which human speech has no name. They are not pits, for they are above ground: and they are not huts, seeing that portions of them do not stand clear from the ground, their roofing of small sticks and clay and earth being strewn over with stones, and sometimes hardly distinguishable from the surrounding chaos. The impression produced on the beholder is that of a field of ruins in which, here and there, where the lower part of the building has not been completely destroyed, living beings have fitted up their haunts. These stone barracks, of which there are at present sixteen, do not, moreover, form one regular row as might be expected in a ruin, but are jumbled together in a confused heap; and the square holes which serve as entrances are in part turned southwards towards the city wall, in part turned away from it.

Such are the abodes of the lepers. The dread of contagion has caused the lepers to be banished to this secluded corner. Those who are better off generally succeed in escaping. It is almost exclusively the poor who are here crowded together, and they have scarcely rags enough to cover their nakedness. In many cases the decay wrought by the disease has made such progress that the sight is repulsive: and seeing that men and women, Christians and Moslems, who wander forth during the day to beg, are housed here together, the moral degradation is still greater than the outward misery, and the leper who, as sheik, has oversight of the quarter, is thankful when no murder or theft has been committed.

In the summer of 1865, a German lady, Baroness von Keffenbrinck-Ascheraden, from Pomerania, accompanied by her husband, visited this receptacle of physical and moral wretchedness, and calling to mind the compassionate love of our Saviour towards lepers, formed the resolve to found an asylum for these

unhappy victims, in which Christian love should minister to them without regard to confession, and with no prosyletising intent, but in the spirit of Jesus. When the plan became known, it inflamed many thousand hearts in Germany and England and in the far East, even in China. So abundantly, indeed, did offerings flow in, that the new Lepers' Hospital, called Jesus-hilfe (Jesus-help) was opened in the spring of 1867. It is situated on the height westward from Jerusalem, to the right of the Jaffa-gate, and near to the pools Birket-es-Sultan and Birket-el-Mamilla. For a time it had to contend against much suspicion, but is now actively carrying forward its work of self-denying love towards its suffering inmates.

This work of charity has engaged my liveliest sympathy, and it has not been in vain that since 1866 I have pressed its claims on the friends of Israel in "Saat auf Hoffnung" (Sowing in Hope). In order, however, to render it further assistance by my pen, I have since that time occupied myself with the history of lepers

and of hospitals. A perusal of "Der arme Heinrich," by Hartmann von der Aue—the story from the middle ages, on which is founded Longfellow's poem of "The Golden Legend"—convinced me that we have there not only important material for the study of the history of civilisation, but also a mine of attractive pictures of strange customs, of noble deeds, and of remarkable providences. The truth of the Christian religion attests itself in no other way so strikingly as by its self-denying love. Noble and touching deeds of love are told of men of every variety of race in all ages. Christianity which is founded on a deed of love, the offering of Himself by the Crucified, and which derives its life from this source, has made this love the centre and the crown of man's duty to his fellows, and has broken those fetters which the ceremonial law of Moses imposed on this law of charity.

A beautiful illustration of this is furnished in the following narrative, which I have compiled from ancient sources, and which bears on the

* * The small figures in the Text refer to the notes at the end of the volume.

CHAPTER I.

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP IN CONFLICT.

ON the day following the feast of Passover, immediately after the minchah-prayer, or vesper, a young man might have been seen walking with quick step toward the Upper Market-place in Jerusalem. Having arrived there, he first glanced at the sun-dial over the portal of Herod's palace, and then began to walk backward and forward in the space between the fountain and the palace. He frequently directed his eyes towards the Gennath-gate as if he was expecting some one. His whole bearing indicated that he was a person of distinction. He was dressed with evident care. On his head was a turban of white and blue linen, the ends of which fell over his dark hair down to his neck. He wore a blue Dalmatica¹ or upper garment, whose folds he held in his right hand,

and underneath it was visible a tunic bordered with gold. But, apart from his bearing and from his dress, you could at once discern in him noble birth and a noble nature. His complexion and form recalled what Jeremiah in Lamentations (iv. 7) says of the nobles of Jerusalem; his countenance was not indeed handsome, but ingenuousness and intelligence, modesty and self-control, were stamped on it, and gave it an expression which at once attracted and commanded respect.

He had gone up and down the short distance but a few times when another young man, a little older, emerged with rapid step from the Gennath-gate, and came up to him. The newcomer was rather under the middle size, neatly but plainly dressed, and, as was evident from his turban² and from his sandals, belonged to a humbler grade in society. His name was Jose;³ that of the friend who waited for him, Benjamin. They were both so-called "disciples of the sages,"⁴ and had been together in the school of Gamaliel the elder, through which the

Apostle Paul, and Onkelos, the translator of the Thora, had also passed. Although they were fellow-students, Jose had come to be Benjamin's teacher, for he had a remarkable acquaintance with the written and with traditional law, and likewise with the prophetic word, at that time so neglected. Through his study of prophecy he had become persuaded that Jesus was the Messiah—a conviction shared with him by many in Jerusalem, who yet did not cease to observe the law nor withdrew from the national worship. Jose had felt attracted toward Benjamin from the time of their first meeting, and the bond was strengthened as he came to know him more closely. It was his constant endeavour to promote his friend's growth in knowledge ; and although Benjamin did not return this warmth of affection with equal heartiness, Jose found a sufficient recompense in his willing readiness to learn, his almost childlike subordination, and his confiding frankness. Their mutual relations were, indeed, disturbed from time to time, but only to become more intimate,

and to give Jose a deeper insight into the pure and noble nature of his friend. It was only in more hallowed moments that Jose spoke to him of his most precious treasure—his Christian faith. It was not his wish to compel his friend to adopt his views ; and as this was a subject which excited strong opposition on the part of Benjamin, he willingly spared himself the pain of calling forth this opposition oftener than was necessary.

When Benjamin caught sight of him, he came towards him with a friendliness which lent new beauty to his countenance ; and Jose greeted him with evident delight. They had arranged to meet here, to take a long walk into the country in the direction of Bethlehem. It was seldom that Jose had the happiness of being all alone with his friend, whose family engagements occupied much of his attention ; and for several days he had been looking forward to this afternoon as to a special enjoyment.

“The weather is in our favour,” he exclaimed.

“Yes,” replied Benjamin ; “we have been

fortunate. The air is pure, and the heat not too great."

It was the loveliest Nisan day one could imagine. The rain of the Easter month was over, the cloudless sky was refulgent with purest sapphire, and the picture of spring in the "Song of Songs"⁵ was realized in its fulness ;—only, the earth itself was the Shulamite, resplendent in beauteous bridal attire, a thousand voices among the branches and aloft in the azure, warbling their notes of love and joyous life.

The friends quickened their steps (so far as that was seemly in "disciples of the sages"), and side by side proceeded in the direction of the valley-gate, the present Jaffa-gate. When Jose thought they were unobserved, he took Benjamin's hand, and clung close to his friend ; but on meeting any one he allowed it to drop, as if no one were to be let into the secret of their intimate friendship. They spoke little till they passed through the gate, and then the conversation became more animated.

When they were fairly outside, Jose, laying his hand on the shoulder of his friend, caused him to turn round to his right, and, pointing back to the city, exclaimed, "See, what splendour!"

Rising from the lofty ancient walls behind Herod's palace, three towers were visible, glittering in the sunlight;—Hippicus, Phasaelus, and Mariamne, so named by their founder after his friend, his brother and his wife. The gigantic octagonal Psephinus stood out conspicuous on the north-east; and all the four⁶ seemed to vie with one another in the beauty of their white limestone and of their graceful forms.

"The most beautiful, after all," said Benjamin, "is Phasaelus, with its double crowning of breastwork and battlement; I can never see it without being reminded of the lighthouse on the island of Pharos, in front of Alexandria."

"How old were you," returned Jose, "when your parents took you with them to visit your relatives there?"

"I was only five years old," was the reply;

‘but the glory of Alexandria, that Egyptian sister of Jerusalem,⁷ is imperishably engraven on my memory.”

“And I am ever charmed afresh,” Jose continued, “by the smaller and less solid, but on that account all the more pleasing, Mariamne, which Herod erected in the hope of thereby silencing the condemnation which his conscience pronounced on the murder of the Asmonæan princess.”

“It is true,” Benjamin broke hastily in, “that her execution was a crime; but she never loved him as he did her. And let us not forget how much Jerusalem and our country owe to those Herods; and that King Agrippa—whom God preserve!—has to a great extent made amends for the sins of his ancestors.”

Jose observed how unpleasantly his remark had affected his friend, and made no further reply.

They now commenced to descend, and soon found themselves in the upper part of the vale of Gihon.

"If it is agreeable to your lordship," said Jose, playfully ignoring their close intimacy, "let us go along the valley, although it is longer."

"As you wish," Benjamin replied. "Be you the guide."

Jose preferred this road to that across the valley, because he hoped to be more alone with Benjamin, and not to be disturbed by meeting people. Discoursing familiarly on learned subjects, or on personal matters, as it chanced, they followed the course of the valley in a southerly direction till they came to the aqueduct from the Elam springs above Solomon's pool. This watercourse was carried by means of an embankment across the valley, and then emptied itself into the pool of Gihon. The friends crossed the embankment, and reached the high-road to Bethlehem, which at this point began perceptibly to ascend.

"There," exclaimed Jose, pointing to the right, "is the hill where, a hundred years ago, that villain⁸ Pompey pitched his camp. A

greater disgrace has never befallen Jerusalem than that he should penetrate into the Temple and cast profane eyes on everything within its precincts, even to the Holy of Holies."

"It was the weakness," said Benjamin, "of the last of the Asmonæans which brought us at that time nigh to the brink of destruction."

"And yet," Jose replied, repressing the comparison which was on his lips between the Asmonæans and the Herodian family, "that was only the beginning of the end. 'The day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall'⁹ is still to come; for the murders that have taken place in Jerusalem, and one before all others, cry aloud to Heaven."

"Oh, do not speak thus, Jose! but remember what David says—'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.'"¹⁰

Jose halted, and laid firm hold of his friend: "Look at those holes drilled in the rock. They were filled with dried wood, which, being moistened, swelled, and rent the rock asunder.

Just such a wedge is for Jerusalem—the wood of the cross on which the Righteous One had to shed His blood.’

“In Alexandria,” said Benjamin, “that would not have happened.”

“True,” was Jose’s reply, as he embraced his friend, “it would not have happened, if in Alexandria they were all like my Benjamin.”

Travelling in order to see the world was not then in vogue ; and even pleasure parties into the country were not the fashion as they are nowadays. And on the Sabbath—which, in consequence of the cessation from the work of the week, afforded an opportunity for outdoor exercise—the Jew was confined within the impassable Sabbath boundary, which was marked off in all directions at a distance of two thousand cubits from the city quadrangle.¹¹ It was therefore with unwonted delight that, when they had ascended a little higher, the two friends hailed the lovely prospect into the vale of Hinnom, winding away to the east. From this point, too, the city itself, with its

many towers and pinnacles, presented a magnificent picture.

"Let us pause here for a little," said Jose, leading Benjamin under the shade of a terebinth. "We are now quite alone; no human eye, only that Eye which beholds all, is observing us. I wish to put a question to you, if you will allow me."

"I am ready to listen to you," replied Benjamin, with a quiet but suspicious smile.

Jose was silent for a little, collecting his thoughts, but at length began, one word after another slowly struggling from heart and mouth:—

"Are you not, then—you with whose heart my own is so closely knit—any nearer to Him whom I love above all beside, as the incarnate love of the Holy One—blessed is He!"¹²

Benjamin was silent, and looked straight before him, as if indifferent.

"He has said," Jose continued, "that whoso loveth any creature more than Himself is not worthy of Him. My love to you, therefore"

(here his voice began to tremble), "I must subordinate to my love to Him; and if you were resolutely to remain at a distance from Him, although my heart is none of the most steadfast, I should yet have to make up my mind to the Moriah sacrifice, and renounce your love."

Benjamin still remained silent. Jose then took Benjamin's down-turned head in his hands, and raising it, and fixing his eyes on his friend's, exclaimed—

"Oh speak, Benjamin! Speak the word that shall make me happy, if happy only in hope!"

"You ought not," said Benjamin, "to attach a condition to your love which it is not in my power to fulfil."

"I attach no condition to it," Jose replied. "I will love you even if you continue to despise Jesus; but how can I love you except in Him who has become the life of my life? In Him I will love you, as He loved, faithfully unto death—ready to give up for you all I am and all I have, in the hope that you shall come

to know Him who died for you as He died for me, and now in heaven, as once on the cross, is stretching out His arms towards you."

"Do not urge me so," said Benjamin. "Let each go his own way, according to his conviction ; and be content with this, that I will not leave you."

"So long as you do not leave me," was the reply, "I cannot but strive to win your soul. But if it should come to that, that you do leave me—well, I shall not force myself upon you, but shall commit you to Him who came to seek the lost ; who loves you with a purer and deeper love than I can with my poor, impetuous, restless heart."

This was said in a slow, broken voice, which was succeeded by a burst of tears ; and hand in hand the two friends pursued their way in silence.

The rays of the sun fell obliquely on their faces, as they wandered along the bekâah (plateau) which stretched before them. Jose wiped the perspiration from his face along with

the remaining tears, which had not escaped the eye of his friend : and after a prolonged pause, the latter broke the silence, and put questions to Jose about several things in the "school" which were not clear to him, and which Jose answered to the best of his ability. Love was the inspiration which enabled him to leave none of the many varied and difficult questions unanswered.

The sun was nearing its setting, and had contracted itself to a ball of an ever-deepening red, as the friends now ascended again a short distance. The road then became once more level, and they rested at a well to refresh themselves with a draught of cooling water. The well is still there by the wayside, not far from the monastery of Mar Elias. To the left of this part of the road lay the rise which was to terminate their rambles. There Jerusalem and Bethlehem could both be seen. The prospect presented to their view on every side was magnificent. Their eyes turned with especial pleasure towards the south. Before them, to the

left of Gilo,¹³ lay the tomb of Rachel, in the evening sunlight. They were quite alone.

"See," exclaimed Jose, "how near the tomb of Rachel seems down there before us!"

"And," continued Benjamin, "behind Bethlehem, on the left, the magnificent Herodium,¹⁴ where King Herod is laid. How the sun is gilding the towers! How distinct the steep marble stairs! How charming a feature in the landscape the clustering houses at the foot of the proud hill!"

"Yes," said Jose, "the view is beautiful. But when I think of its grand associations, the simple monument of your ancestress is more beautiful still."

"Are you then determined to make me a Benjamite?" said Benjamin, smiling.

"If I could, I would make you, if not of the same stock, at least of the same mind as Saul of Tarsus, for whom, because he has become a Christian, Rabban Gamaliel mourns as for one dead."

"This people of Palestine is, and will re-

main," returned Benjamin, "a narrow, intolerant race."

In the midst of this friendly talk, when he thought the fitting moment had arrived, Jose asked, "Might we not here kneel down in prayer together?" .

"Gladly," answered Benjamin.

"Then, for this once," continued Jose, "I will pray as if I were in your place; and God grant that I may succeed in giving expression to your feelings."

He drew Benjamin with him down on his knees, and after they had knelt for a little in silence, Jose began:—"O God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, who on yonder spot didst take from our ancestor his dearly-loved partner,—thou art a God of the living, and not of the dead; they live with Thee, and Thou hast performed what Thou didst promise to them. And Thou revealest Thy face still, as in the days of old to our fathers. Oh, grant us to know whether Jesus of Nazareth, who was born there in Bethlehem, be the promised Seed of

Abraham. If it be He whom His own nation has betrayed and delivered to the Gentiles, as Joseph, the son of Rachel, was sold by his own brothers, grant that He may make Himself known to us in love, as Joseph made himself known to his brethren, and especially to Benjamin, the dearest of them all." In words like these Jose prayed; and at the close fell into the liturgical strains so familiar to them both: "Blessed be Thou, who causest a horn of salvation to arise! Blessed be Thou, who hearest prayer!"

When they rose he fell upon Benjamin's neck: the latter allowed him to do so, as if bereft of will; he was pale, and cold, and silent. Nor did Jose say anything; he was still too much under the influence of the prayer to allow of his doing so. They therefore descended in silence, and took once more the road across the plateau by which they had come.

The sun disappeared beneath the horizon, and Benjamin observed, "It will be late before

we get back." Beyond that, however, he left the speaking to Jose, and when forced to reply, was sparing of his words, recalling his thoughts with difficulty, and falling back again into listless brooding and dreaming. His step, moreover, was hasty ; and always repeating that it was very late, he hurried Jose forward along with him. Jose's love, hoping all things, put the most favourable interpretation on this marble-like coldness ; but when they entered the gate, and, at the point where their paths diverged, Jose wished to accompany his friend as far as his house, the latter declined this in courteous language, but in a sharp tone. Jose thus went his own way alone, sad because of this abrupt parting, but yet full of a greater joy from the pleasure their united excursion had afforded him.

As for Benjamin, he hurried off with rapid step, and, when out of sight of Jose, ran rather than walked. He was expected on this evening in the house of Menahem, the Ab-beth-din, —that is, the vice-president of the Sanhedrim.

Menahem was a man of a good family, and occupied a position of influence at the court of King Agrippa. The high position of the family, as well as their wealth and refinement of manners, had a great attraction for Benjamin; but still more so the daughter of the house, the beautiful and gifted as well as devout Schelamzi,¹⁵ who to his eye was the bright centre of the whole—a diamond in a setting of gold. She regarded him, who did not seem to her inferior in rank to herself, with an interest which made him proud and happy, and by degrees set his heart on fire. This attachment, although it had not yet found expression, like a pent-up fire inflamed his whole being. The affection for Jose kept its ground, indeed, in presence of the rival passion, but was thrown by it into the shade. It was impossible that love to Jesus, the Messiah, could spring up in Benjamin's heart: that for Schelamzi excluded it. In her family the Nazarene was derided as a beggar-king and a demoniac, and cursed as a traitor and an instigator to apostasy.

Benjamin was not a free man as regarded his friend. The persuasive force with which Jose urged him spent itself on a concealed barrier which, unknown to him, was forming a crust on the heart of his friend.

Benjamin arrived later than he was expected ; and Schelamzi was penetrating enough to perceive that she was losing power over him in proportion as Jose, the disciple of the Nazarene, was gaining.

When he excused himself on the ground that his walk with Jose had detained him longer than he had wished, she gave vent to her vexation in the hasty exclamation : " When will you wrest yourself from this serpent ? "

" You may ask when," her mother broke in ; and added, more in spite than in anger, " but let our friend have his own way. If he is determined to be a mîn¹⁶ [heretic], a whole one is always better than a half."

The father, however, now came forward, and said gravely, " Ladies, where are your thoughts wandering to ? You must not think that you

have vinegar, the son of wine,¹⁷ before you. A son of Boëthus, in whose veins Alexandrian is mingled with Jewish blood, is not likely ever to sink to the level of a Galilean idiot. Sit down, my son," he continued ; "sit down, and tell us how you stopped the mouth of the officious Jose."

"Yes, yes !" exclaimed Schelamzi, who was getting composed again, now that she saw him before her ; "tell us how you showed the fox that Benjamin is a ravening wolf.¹⁸ But, first of all, drink this goblet of generous Lebanon wine, which has been long waiting you, and which I mixed with my own hand."

As she said this, her voice resumed its clearest silver tones, and her eyes continued to rest on Benjamin, till the sense of insult offered to his friend was lost in the dominating influence of love to herself.

"Well, then," said he, taking the glass, "I drink it in honour of the friendship of the family of Menahem, too sensible to give way to those foolish fears."

When he had drained the glass, Jose's image flitted reprovingly before his mind's eye, and his conscience accused him of treachery ; but all this disquietude was overborne by the rapture with which his heart beat in the presence of Schelamzi. What on his entrance had deeply offended him, appeared to him now in the light of anxious interest in his welfare, and as a pledge of affection which more than ever transformed Schelamzi in his eyes. The evening fled like a moment in an eternity, and he was sorry to be obliged to think of the hour and of going home.

It was nearly midnight when he departed. The voice of conscience, stifled before, made itself heard, and he blamed himself for sacrificing his friend by his cowardly silence ; the blissful feeling of the lover gave place to self-condemnation ; the conflict of thoughts which alternately accused and excused one another became more violent ; and when he entered the house where his mother was still astir and looking for her darling, she said to him, after

she had put some questions: "My child, you seem to me to-night so sad, so troubled! Make haste, and get to rest. The Lord our God spread over you the pavilion of His peace."

unbearable. He felt himself ill in mind and body. His sufferings drove him to God : but scarcely had he begun to compose himself to pray, when the thread of his thoughts was broken from the effects of the previous day. At length the mist of semi-consciousness settled down on the scene of this inward conflict, and the notes of the priestly trumpets from the Temple battlements were interwoven with his delirious dreams without awaking him.

Beruria, full of anxiety, was waiting for her Benjamin to come to morning prayer and to the morning meal. Seeing that he made no sign, she at length went to his room, and, approaching the bedside, exclaimed, "It is as I foreboded,—my child is sick ! O God, thou Father of the orphan and of the widow, have mercy upon us !"

Hearing his mother's voice, Benjamin opened his large eyes with their long eye-lashes. The left eye, however, remained partially closed, small white spots having

the sleeper, and had examined the affected eye, and the hand, said, with cheerful mien, "Keep your mind easy, madam. The spots on the eyelids are small, and together are only the size of a grain of Cilician barley; and the scurf on the hand is isolated and has no suspicious colour. Take seven grains of arsinoe wheat, roast them in an iron pan which has never been used, and with the oil which they will give out paint over the eye and the hand⁴ of your son. I hope he will thus escape the 'evil thing'⁶ and not fall into the hands of the priests, those ignorant gazers and venal turnkeys." And the wise man became so animated in the proud consciousness of his medical knowledge that Benjamin awoke.

"Make trial of your skill, Rab Ami: but if the Holy One—blessed is He—has ordained evil for us, we will do as His holy law requires."

"But tell me, son of Boëthus," exclaimed Rab Ami, "what happened to you yesterday that has made you so feverish, and has caused

natural that she should take every precaution to keep the illness of her son a secret. The character of the disease was still uncertain ; but rumour, with its proneness to exaggerate, would undoubtedly have anticipated the decision in an unfavourable sense, to the discredit of the family. Leprosy was regarded not only as a misfortune, but as a stigma ; indeed, the opinion was widely prevalent that it was possible to enumerate the sins of which it was the punishment.¹⁰ Pointing back to Miriam, who was visited with leprosy because of her seditious language towards her brother Moses,¹¹ evil-speaking was regarded as the special sin which was followed by this malady, whose name, indeed, was derived from it.¹² How soon, therefore, would wicked tongues have been busied in stamping as a slanderer this high-minded youth, who, as matter of fact, was careful to adjust his words to the inward law of truth and love ! But to-day, and for several days to come, he was confined to his bed, and was suffering so much

on the day of their excursion had left an uneasy impression on his mind, and he looked for his next visit with more than usual eagerness. He felt sure that Benjamin would come to him at latest on the third day. And now, as one day followed another, he was ready to question the reality and sincerity of his friend's love, and he blamed himself for the strength of his own affection, and said that he should be happier if he were able to free his heart from the enthrallment. The inward conflict was so violent that he could get no refreshing sleep ; and the third night he rose as if to escape from himself, and falling on his knees before the cross* which stood in his room, he fervently besought the Father of Jesus Christ to teach him to love as the crucified One loved, and to kindle within him a heavenly flame which should outshine the love of the creature, to bid the tempest of his soul be still, and make him a partaker of that

* The introduction of a cross in this passage has given offence to some of my readers ; but it should be remembered that it is a cross, not a crucifix.

On Beruria's replying, "Yes, he is ill," he begged her, while his eyes filled with tears, to permit him to see him.

"That is impossible, Mar* Jose; it might do you harm."

He then seized her hand, and covering it with mingled kisses and tears, exclaimed,—

"O lady, mother of my friend, I cannot go away without seeing him; grant me this one request. Is not God with me?"

Beruria then conducted him upstairs to her son's room, where he stood a long time by her side, silent and absorbed in prayer. After a while his friend opened his eyes, when Jose took his hand and softly breathed the watch-word of their friendship, "My Benjamin."

As the sufferer's face brightened and was suffused with his own beautiful smile, Jose bent over him, and placing his left hand under his head, with his right he stroked his hair and his cheeks, and kissing first his mouth and then the eye that was still whole, exclaimed, "Just as in

* Mr.

maintained a long time stretched with his face to the ground, and when he rose, exclaimed, full of ecstatic joy : " The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works."

In the family of the Vice-President Menahem there was also surprise that Benjamin remained away so long. Schelamzi was impatiently looking for him, and laid the blame on Jose : but as Benjamin's preference for her had not yet been openly declared, nor any close intimacy formed with his mother, it was not thought proper to make direct inquiries.

Benjamin took ill in the night between the first and second days of the week. He had gradually become calmer, and was evidently stronger for the words spoken by Jose. The outward manifestations of the disease, however, increased instead of diminishing. He now insisted on sending for a priest to examine him and pronounce over him.

The holding of a court of justice, and examination by a priest, were alike forbidden on the Sabbath.¹³ His mother promised to bespeak a

The next day Chananja came. As he made a hurried examination of the young man, you could read in his face that the case was a serious one.

"Shall I undress?" Benjamin inquired, with trembling voice.

"No, son of Boëthus," replied Chananja. "The day is cloudy, and is not suitable for the examination. Besides, I dare not examine you here in the room; it must take place in the open air, down in the court. It is cool rather than warm to-day, and might do you harm.¹⁴ To-morrow we may, perhaps, have a sunnier, warmer Iyar day. I shall come between the eighth and ninth hour [between two and three in the afternoon], as soon as the Kodesch-Kodaschim¹⁵ meal in the holy place is concluded. But tell me, my son, how did this poison steal its way into your pure blood? You are not a backbiter: but examine yourself whether you have not been guilty of idolatry or of profaning the name of God for our sages place these sins in the forefront of those which have leprosy as

their consequence.¹⁶ Let me be frank with you ; you know we are cousins. I heard, in the house of the Ab-beth-din, that you are associating with a disciple of the Hung.¹⁷ Shake this serpent from your hand. Leprous scales are serpents' scales.¹⁸ What right have they on the unsullied body of a scion of a priestly house ? Leave them to the beggar rabble which composes the community of the bastard !¹⁹ It is, however, unnecessary to warn a son of Boëthus against apostasy. Good-bye, my son. God grant that to-morrow my verdict may turn out in your favour."

As he took leave of Beruria, he observed, "A wise physician commences the treatment from within."

Next morning, when Beruria awoke out of the half-dozing state into which she had not fallen till long after midnight, she rose as noiselessly as possible and ascended to the terrace of the house, fastening the door behind her. The house, which had long belonged to the family, was situated in Zion, in the present so-called

Arcade of St. Peter. From the terrace there was an extensive view in all directions. The face of the orient sky was beaming in purest purple. Breaking through the purple, the sun, as it were an image of the divine glory, was soaring slowly, but confident of victory, above the glowing ridge of Olivet : while to the south-east, in the far distance, the discomfited mists sought a hiding-place in the bosom of the Dead Sea. The pinnacles and marble walls of the Temple stood out in dazzling splendour. The royal pond, on the other side of the Tyropœan, as if responding to the sun's greeting, swayed to and fro, stirred by the morning breezes ; and the palms, and cypresses, and sweet-pines among the houses blithely bent their heads as if to kiss each other.

It was a festive, beauteous morn, but to Beruria the harbinger of a momentous day. She remained a long time leaning against the parapet, and many a tear rolled down her cheeks, to mingle with the dew-drops on the roses below. At length she moved, and made

her way to a sort of arbour, but still an enclosed room, attached to the second story, where she fell on her face and sobbed and prayed: "O Thou Father of the widow and of the orphan, let this day be a day of mercy to Thine handmaid and to the son of Thine handmaid, and not a day of wrath—of deliverance, and not of reproach." But the divine response which awoke within her was the word: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways."

When she rose, however, she felt strengthened by the assurance that God's thoughts toward her and her son were thoughts of peace and not of evil.

In this frame of mind Beruria descended, and opened a room which she kept very carefully secured. It contained the archives of the family and the family jewels. Here was kept a diadem which Herod the Great had presented to Mariamne, the daughter of Simon, Boëthus' son, who, through the spell of her beauty, had procured the elevation of the family to ponti-

fical and princely dignity.⁸⁰ There were also several pieces of the so-called golden vestment in which Simon had officiated—mementoes of their ancestors which the family had been influential enough to obtain at the time when they were to have been deposited in the "Antonia."⁸¹ In another part of the room there was a tent,—the frame, with its costly hangings,—which, nearly twenty years before, Beruria's husband, who had been early taken from her, had provided on the occasion of his making an excursion with her to the mountains of Gebalene in the south-west.

Calling the servants, she ordered them to carry this frame with its belongings out to the court. This room was in the lower story, on the south side of the court. The court itself was paved with marble. In the centre, as was to be seen only in the higher class of houses, there was a marble basin and fountain. The right-hand corner, north-west from this artificial water, was overgrown with vines and pomegranates, planted in marble pots, and now in

bloom. Aloft the angles were richly ornamented with the gaily-painted carved work to which the Psalmist likens the grace and beauty of the daughters of Jerusalem.²² Stepping out into the court, Beruria reviewed it in all directions, and at length decided that the tent should be erected where the sun had best of all access—in the space between the fountain and the artificial garden. She also had carpets brought to cover the marble floor of the tent, and the few yards of unoccupied space outside of it.

When the cohen (priest) Chananja arrived, she received him below, and then went upstairs to Benjamin's room.

"The hour has come for the examination; be strong, Benjamin, and of good courage, and wait on the Lord."

Benjamin descended after his mother, and when they reached the threshold of the court, she turned, and, pressing him in silence to her heart, allowed him to pass out. She herself retired to the inner part of the house, whither she had also ordered the servants.

Taking his seat in the tent, Benjamin undressed, and Chananja proceeded with the examination. Benjamin had to place himself before him with his feet wide apart, like one weeding a garden, while his arms were raised aloft, as in gathering the fruit of the olive tree.²³

Only in a few places on the back and on the breast were the leprous spots to be seen, their whiteness appearing dull and grey on the white skin of the young man, like the mortar on a house, or the shell of an egg.²⁴ It was difficult to determine whether they were "in sight lower than the skin." But on the spots on the left shoulder there was a reddish tint visible, as if red wine had been poured on snow, or a few drops of blood mingled with milk. This indication was more suspicious.²⁵ Decisive, however, was the circumstance that from one of these spots there protruded "quick raw flesh" about the size of a lentil. Still Chananja continued to search, in the hope of escaping the unfavourable verdict: but when he could no longer hide

from himself that not two only but several hairs on the breast as well as on the eyelids had turned white, he said,—

“It is enough, my son. Put on your clothes again, and bow beneath the hand of God which has stricken you : you are unclean.”

Quickly enveloping himself, Benjamin replied, “I said so to myself. The Holy One—blessed is He!—has found out the transgression of His servant.”

“It is well for you,” answered Chananja, “that you yourself acknowledge it. ‘Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?’”²⁶ You know now what you have to do. You must leave the threefold camp—of Israel, of the Levites, and of God, who is enthroned in the Temple.”²⁷

“I will do so,” said Benjamin ; and hope in spirit to abide in the camp of the Shechinah” (the Divine Presence).

At the same time he bowed to Chananja, who then departed. In the priestly circle he told his friends that he had never seen such

purity and beauty of the person in conjunction with leprous uncleanness.

“These leprous sores were like the wounds which adorn the body of a young hero. As he stood before me with upraised hands and I gazed into his suffering face, by the Temple!²⁸ I felt as if he were about to fly away from me towards heaven.”

CHAPTER III.

FRIENDSHIP VICTORIOUS.

THE same afternoon, at the hour when the examination was to take place, a young man was pacing up and down in that part of the Upper City in which the house of Boëthus was situated. He sought to appear as if, in walking backwards and forwards, he had no definite object in view: but any one watching him more closely could not fail to observe that his movements bore some reference to that house, and to the Xystus, in the vicinity of which several leading priests resided, and that he never went so far as to be unable, on turning round, to have the former within view. When he had returned to it for, at least, the tenth time, and had passed a little way beyond, Chananja came out, taking the

direction of the Xystus. The young man, looking round at the same moment, caught sight of him, and apparently hurried after him. But on reaching the house which the priest had just quitted, he turned aside, and sat down on one of the stone seats in the archway of the door, leaning back in a corner as one asleep.

He remained just long enough for Chananja to have disappeared, and then rising, proceeded towards Herod's Palace, where for nearly half an hour he walked up and down in the palace grounds, plucking the leaves, one after another, from a branch of a tree which he held in his hand, while his lips moved as if in prayer. When the branch was quite bare, he threw it into the water of the canal near the royal castle, and hurried away with the brisk step of one engaged in the prosecution of his calling. Having arrived once more at the residence of the Boëthus family, he knocked sharply with a door-ring on one of the iron knobs with which the

door, constructed of thick oak beams, was ornamented.

It was Jose, who, when convinced that the examination was over, had apportioned Benjamin and his mother half an hour to confer with one another : but who now, the painful waiting at an end, and his shyness somewhat overcome, desired to be admitted to Beruria's presence, to make an important communication. Mother and son were sitting near to one another.

"Madam," he exclaimed, bursting into tears, and the words struggling convulsively from his breast "I know what God has appointed you. Benjamin must leave the city. You will desire to keep him as near you as possible. To have him quartered outside the new City, which King Agrippa is at present enclosing with a wall, would not be agreeable to you ; it is too far off. But Beth-Hini (Bethany), on the Mount of Olives, is near at hand, and has a healthy situation. A brother of my dear mother lives there,

who supports himself by the cultivation of figs, and by keeping in addition a small dairy. He is willing to receive Benjamin into the upper room of his small but comfortable cottage, and I have had the room arranged quite to Benjamin's liking. Oh grant me the happiness of being allowed to take him there ! I can tend him all unnoticed, and can bring you daily word how he is. It is true, Beruria, that I am a Christian ; and that occasions you serious scruples. But I will not importune my friend with my religious convictions : besides, they are not unknown to him. One thing, however, you cannot and you will not seek to forbid me ; that is, to pray for him in the name of Jesus. Benjamin will celebrate the feast of Schabuoth (Pentecost) in restored health. I know it, and I pray you, in the name of Him who healed Miriam and Naaman, make not void God's purpose ; allow Benjamin to remove to Beth-Hini."

Turning to his friend and embracing him,

he said, "I am right, am I not? you do not oppose? I feel myself incomparably nearer to you now you are sick than when you were in health; and what I said before, I now feel doubly sure of,—you shall not die, but live: and declare the works of the Lord."

These words were spoken in a firm voice. Jose's form, ordinarily bent, rose to its full height, and he stood before mother and son in the strength and lustre of a higher life, revealing itself behind its earthly veil.

A long pause ensued. Benjamin left it to his mother, whom he not only loved but revered, to speak first.

Beruria was no ordinary woman. Although by birth she did not belong to the aristocracy of Jerusalem, she possessed an unusual degree of culture combined with great nobility of character. She was ever striving after that which was ideal: although, in consequence of her natural vivacity, the favourite objects of her admiration or of her inquiry were frequently changed. She had made herself

familiar with the different tendencies of the Judaism of her day. She had become acquainted with the system of the Essenes, and was attracted by the monastic seclusion and austere morals of that order. Her poetic nature, however, led her to take still greater delight in the impressive pomp of the Temple worship. Each celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, with the so-called "rejoicing at the pouring out of the water,"¹ and each Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), with the repeated adorations on hearing the mystic name of God, found in her an enthusiastic encomiast. How could she have had unmingled pleasure in Benjamin's friendship with Jose? It is true that, as a result of the mingling of Alexandrian with Jewish influences in the family, she entertained liberal views on religious questions: but what she had heard of the faith of the Christians appeared to her in the light of a grotesque fable, and the accounts of their worship insipid and prosaic. The thought that a Boëthus should one day

become a member of this Ebionite sect was intolerable, and she would have preferred to see Benjamin freed from the danger of being so ensnared. But, on the other hand, her penetrating eye had never discovered in Jose any trace of refined self-seeking or of schemes for proselyting : his behaviour towards Benjamin, in whom, from the beginning, he had sought to awaken and to strengthen endeavour after the highest and holiest ends, had only one motive, and that consisted in an affection which reposed on affinity of soul, and which, from day to day, with truly inexhaustible inventiveness, was occupied with one thought—how to serve him and to afford him pleasure. This affection Beruria knew how to appreciate, having herself a nature at once capable of forming friendships and standing in need of them ; and she could enter into Jose's position, and realize the pain which a refusal would occasion him. She had had, however, another plan in view ; she had thought of removing Benjamin to Colonia,² a homely little place not

far off, which furnished the willows for the Feast of Tabernacles. Still, she must acknowledge to herself that no more thoughtful eyes could watch over her son than Jose's; and, besides, the assurance with which the latter predicted the recovery of the patient was not without its influence on her maternal heart.

When her generous estimate of the mutual affection of the youths and a mother's self-denying love had carried the day, she at length broke silence.

"Mar Jose, the prospect which you hold out to your sick friend is a daring one. God grant that it may be realized! Let us place our destinies in His hands. You wish me to let you take Benjamin with you to Beth-Hini. I have thought of another plan, and there is no doubt that other offers will be made to us. This matter in which you cross my purposes; is a difficult one to decide, especially as I do not hide from myself that if I give over Benjamin to you, there is more involved than his bodily health. But you love him, love him

more perhaps than any other human being except myself, and I know that in granting your request I make you happy. Take him, then, if he is himself willing to go."

"Your will, best of mothers," said Benjamin, "is my will;" and he drew his mother's hand to his heart.

"But, child, have you considered what Chananja and a hundred others will say if—Jose will pardon me the expression—you follow this Nazarene? And have you considered that the Ab-beth-din will perhaps place one of his country houses at your disposal, and what impression your giving the preference to Jose will produce on this family of strict Pharisees?"

"Is there really any prospect of such an offer?" inquired Benjamin.

"I have reason to think it more than probable."

Benjamin became thoughtful. There was an evident struggle. Affection for his friend and love for a woman waged a conflict in his breast. But the recollection of the fatal evening from

which his illness dated decided for the friend against the loved one. He recognised that to become further involved with the Menahem family was not the way to have his health restored.

"If you are really willing to burden yourself with me, Jose," he said, with a tremor in his voice, "I am ready to go to Beth-Hini."

"God be praised!" exclaimed Jose. "May He bless your choice; may He reward your faithfulness! If agreeable to you and to your dear mother, I shall come the day after tomorrow, before 'the hind of dawn' (the first rays of morning), and accompany you to the Mount of Olives while all is yet still."

"We shall expect you, Jose," said Beruria. Jose then kissed her hand, and pressing that of the leper, departed.

He rushed through the Upper City and—passing out by the gate between the two royal palaces—through the suburb, and descended in dangerous haste the steep road down to the Kidron. In the valley he broke off a terebinth branch covered with leaves, and let leaf

after leaf drop with audible exclamations of praise and prayer. Ascending the hill, he turned round, and called to the Holy City,—“Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.”^s And when a turning in the road screened him from view, he fell on his face in his excess of joy, and uttered the words,—“I am not worthy of this, O my God!” He thought he recognized the footprints of Jesus, and pressed his forehead against them. The Mount of Olives had never seemed so beautiful. The outward sunshine and the sunshine in his heart blended into one ocean of light. The trees seemed to clap their hands, and the white grey sand sparkled like precious stones.

Dripping with perspiration, and trembling for very joy, like a messenger who brings the first news of a hard-fought victory, he burst into his uncle’s house with the cry,—“He is coming! The day after to-morrow, in the early morning, I shall bring him.”

CHAPTER IV.

REMOVAL TO BETHANY.

"THE leper in whom the plague is," says the third of the five books of Moses, called the Book of Leviticus, "his clothes shall be rent, and the hair of his head* unbound, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled ; he is unclean : he shall dwell alone ; without the camp shall his habitation be."¹ The rending of the garments, the loose flowing hair, and the covering of the upper lip, were, in the case of the man,² the marks of one mourning for the dead. In order, however, that the leper, whether man or woman, should not be taken for a mourner merely, he must call to those

* Author's rendering, and retained in the translation for the sake of the sequel.

meeting him, "Unclean!" in order that they might go out of his way, and that they might entreat God to be merciful to him.³ The command to cover the upper lip, and therefore also the head, was further interpreted as requiring that the lips should be kept firmly closed, as in the case of an excommunicated person and of a mourner, and that the leper should not salute any one.⁴ Those requirements, moreover, suffered no relaxation on holidays, notwithstanding the festive joy which was then prescribed; and even the high priest, who, when a death had taken place in his family, might yet on holidays perform his sacred functions at the altar, if afflicted with leprosy had to conform himself to them in all their strictness.⁵ King Uzziah himself, when he became a leper, took up his abode outside the city, and never again entered the Temple.⁶

In unwallied towns and in villages such as Bethany the leper was allowed to remain :⁷ but he had to depart out of every town surrounded with walls, in accordance with a tradition that

Joshua had adjudged the holiness of "the three camps of Israel" to all walled cities, but had excepted the plain and the open places.⁸ Outside the city wall, leper might dwell with leper :⁹ but other ceremonially unclean persons were not at liberty to dwell with lepers, according to the interpretation put upon the words of the Thora—"He shall dwell alone."

Benjamin complied with this requirement of the law in leaving the city, enclosed in those days by the wall round Zion (or the Upper City), and by that of Hezekiah round Acra (or the Lower City), and in removing eastwards beyond the Kidron to Beth-Hini (Bethany), on the Mount of Olives. His friend Jose was one of the Jews who believed on Jesus as the Messiah, of whom, at the time of St. Paul's first visit to Jerusalem (A.D. 58), there were several thousands. These Christian believers from among Israel regarded themselves, alike with the rest of their fellow-countrymen, as subject to the law of Moses, and, although they had their own separate services, continued to

take part in the worship of the Temple, not yet overtaken by the impending Divine judgment which has inscribed the close of the old covenant in letters of blood and flame on the page of the world's history. Simeon, on the other hand, Jose's uncle in Beth-Hini, was a Jew of the old type, who always replied to his nephew, when with youthful enthusiasm he pressed upon him the claims of the new faith, that he was too old to reconcile himself to the change. But he was far from condemning the *Mînim*, as the members of the Christian community were called. If for no other reason, he was kept from doing so by his regard for Jose, whom he not only loved as the last remaining representative of his house, which had all but perished in days of famine and pestilence, but of whom he also felt proud, as well on account of his gifts and acquirements as because of his virtues.

The day previous to Benjamin's departure, Beruria had, with tender solicitude, collected together everything which she thought likely

to render her son's stay in the simple cottage comfortable and homelike, and as little of a trouble to old Simeon as possible; and had hired a karrâr¹⁰ (carman) to come late in the evening and transport the various articles to Beth-Hini. Soon after midnight, but not a moment earlier than was necessary, she awoke Benjamin, gently shaking his shoulder, and clothing her summons in the prayer of the Psalmist, "Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up Thy strength, and come and save us." ¹¹

With the question, "Is Jose there?" he quickly rose and put on the clothes laid out for him by his mother; and then repeating the words, "His clothes shall be rent, and his hair unbound," made right and left a slit in the breast of the green tallith¹² (mantle) which he had thrown over him, and shook out his smooth but abundant hair, so as to cause it to fly loosely. When, a little later, Jose entered, he threw the black sudar over his head, veiling at the same time his face as far as the upper lip,

with its scarcely perceptible moustache, and with outstretched and warning hand called to him, "Unclean, unclean!"

The other, however, came forward, and embracing him, said, "Blessed be the Lord our God, the everlasting King, who hath opened a fountain to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." ¹³

Mother and son now took leave of one another, and Jose led the way into the street, preceding his friend by several steps, as if they were strangers to each other. Leaving the Temple on their right hand, they took the road to the north-east, in the direction of the corner gate, through which you descended to the valley of the Kidron, past the present Birket-es-Serain. Near the west wall of the Temple,¹⁴ where the Jews' Place of Lamentation is now situated, Rab Ami, the doctor, met them. He recognized Jose, and knew at once who it was that, all muffled up, came after him.

With trembling voice, and in evident em-

barrassment, Benjamin uttered the warning—"Unclean, unclean!" As a leper, he dared not salute.

Rab Ami, however, halted, and pronouncing the name Nazareth in such a way that it acquired the sense of "city of lepers,"¹⁵ exclaimed, "Mar Benjamin, beware of Nazareth. Leprosy of the soul is worse than leprosy of the body."

Benjamin remained silent, nor did Jose make any remark. But when they had gone a short distance, Jose turned round and recited the words of the Book of Isaiah: "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

The words sank into Benjamin's wounded spirit like cooling dew from heaven.

They went on through the still streets, and the fresh cool breeze from the Mediterranean, which sprang up with the grey dawn, seemed to permeate Benjamin as with new vital energy. Rab Ami's bitter words were soon forgotten, and the walk with the friend did Benjamin good, as when one takes a pleasant journey to a pleasanter destination.

As they descended the steep road down to the Kidron valley, Jose continued to go on in front, but turned round every now and then to have a sight of his friend ; it made him inexpressibly happy to have now the prospect of being alone with him for an indefinite time, and not merely for a fixed number of hours and days, and he was proud to be permitted to act as his guide and nurse. The twilight of the departing night lingered for a time, and was then lost in the breaking dawn. The cloudless morn gave the prospect of a bright but warm Iyar day. The heavenly gazelle¹⁶ pressed forward on her course ; and when her approach was announced by the appearing of her horns in the first streaks of dawn, Jose exclaimed, "See there, Benjamin, the hind of the dawn !" ¹⁷ and, involuntarily reminded of the Twenty-second Psalm, he sang the first part of the psalm to the stirring elegiac melody proper to it, beating time with his hands and feet, as if it were a merry popular song.

On reaching the Kidron bridge they rested,

and feasted their eyes on the view of the rosy shimmer of the chalk on which the walls of the city and of the Temple were borne, and which returned the greeting of the reddening orient. The rain season was past, and there was no water in the bed of the Kidron; but amongst the accumulation of boulders and *débris* there were traces of vegetable life, sown by the retreating waters, and grassy spots and clusters of flowers relieved the bareness of rock and sand on the torrent's banks. When they had passed over the bridge, Jose called to his friend to halt, and stooping down over the bank on the farther side, plucked a bunch of red immortelles,¹⁸ which he placed in Benjamin's hand.

Their path now lay along the left bank of the Kidron, over the western slope of the Mount of Olives. Occasionally they encountered a man or a woman going to the city, generally with a basket in the hand or on the head, in which they carried early figs¹⁹ covered over with leaves of cucumber. Jose then went on in front: but when he saw no one coming or looking back at

them, he walked by his friend's side, and, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the latter, took hold of his hand.

They came to Gethsemane. The thick cluster of olives was still standing which, not long after, when the tenth Roman legion was encamped here, fell before the axe of the besiegers. The bright fresh green of the grove, all the more luxuriant after the dew of the previous night, had an inviting appearance.

"Let us rest a little," said Jose, "under the silver canopy²⁰ of this branching olive. Here," he continued, "David once prayed when his people rejected him;²¹ and here also prayed the Messiah, David's Son, when He was rejected."

"I know it," said Benjamin; "and if I had been alive then, I should not have belonged to his persecutors."

"Well," Jose replied, "you could not love me if you hated Him. Here He resolved to drain the deadly cup for the salvation of all Israel, and for your salvation. When God shall loose your tongue to exclaim with Thomas, 'My

Lord and my God,' then new life will stream into your soul, and into your body also."

Benjamin looked hurt, and said, coldly and sharply, "Let us press on before it becomes hot."

The ascent became gradually steeper. To the remarks of Jose, which were somewhat urgent, and designed to remove the impression produced by the conversation in Gethsemane, Benjamin replied only in monosyllables. The sense of vigour of which he had been conscious earlier in the morning, as of a harbinger of approaching recovery, had gradually given place to a feeling of general prostration. The rays of the rising sun, which, the higher the friends ascended, fell more directly on Benjamin's affected eye, caused it to smart. The bahereth (leprous spots) on the left shoulder burned like fire with every movement of his clothes, and the raw flesh occasioned him biting pains. He perspired and became feverish, alternately burning with heat and shivering from cold. Still, he did not complain, and you would not have noticed

that it was with difficulty he dragged himself along.

On reaching the middle summit of the mount, however, he exclaimed, "Let me rest here a little;" and, without waiting for a reply, sat down on the grass to the left of the road.

When Jose sat down beside him, and looked into his face, he was not a little alarmed at the appearance of the eye, now quite closed, the colourless lips, and the panting breath.

"You find the journey too much for you, Benjamin," he said, wiping the cold sweat from his friend's brow.

"Do not be reckless," exclaimed the latter—"exposing yourself in that way to infection!"

"Oh, no," replied Jose; "I rely on the promise of Him who has said, 'If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.'"²³

He rose and gathered a nosegay of wild thyme and organy,²³ and allowed Benjamin to inhale the refreshing perfume.

Jerusalem lay opposite to them, and as it reflected the beams of the morning sun, looked

as if it were lit up by myriads of lamps. The pinnacles of the Temple sparkled like a crown of diamonds. Benjamin in spirit greeted his mother on the other side of the valley, and secretly greeted also Schelamzi. The trumpets of the priests were heard from the Temple, and the friends were still and prayed.

After a considerable pause, Benjamin, making an effort to rise, said, "Let us go on."

Jose, reaching him his hand, gently assisted him, and whispered in his ear, "'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.' He will help us still."

When they had gone a short distance, the tread of men and of beasts of burden was heard ringing through the air, and Jose joyfully exclaimed, "Kol dodi hinne-ze bâ!"²⁴ (Hark! there comes my uncle.)

Jose was right. Behind a turning of the road old Simeon was seen advancing, leading his mule by the halter.

"Baruch habâ" (Blessed is he that cometh), Jose called to him. The uncle replied with a hearty "Zafra taba de-mare" (Good-morning,

gentlemen) ; adding immediately, "Now, Jose, help your friend on to this gentle animal, in order that we may soon come under the shadow of my roof." ²⁵

"Are you then really willing," asked Benjamin, "to receive me into your house,—me, the unclean, who make everything, even the air you breathe with me, defiled ?" ²⁶

"Get into the saddle, Mar Benjamin," was the answer. "Jose is my nephew, and you are his friend,—my house is yours. Be of good courage ; the air of the Holy Land, they say, makes wise,²⁷ and you shall find that the air of Beth-Hini makes whole as well."

When Benjamin was seated, the ascent was renewed. Simeon and Jose walked one on either side of him.

"Are you then very sick, my son ?" inquired Simeon.

"I am, Mar Simeon," replied Benjamin, in a firm but shrill, hoarse voice.

"Oh well !" said the former, "the more sick the better. We peasants have a proverb :

‘Bright clouds give little water, dark ones give much.’²⁸ My father’s brother, of blessed memory (I say this although he was a zealous friend of the Nazarene), was also a leper, and was thought to be a hopeless one : but he recovered, and although afterwards known as Simeon the leper, he was in better health than hundreds of others.

While the talkative old man was seeking to minister consolation, they arrived at the height from which the road to Beth-Hini descended along the eastern slope. Entrancing, in the morning sunlight, was the prospect which here spread itself out before them. Beyond the barren declivity of Olivet, which was gradually merged in the desert, a winding strip of green in the waste of El-Ghor marked the course of the Jordan in its sunken bed. Farther to the right was visible the Dead Sea, with its mirror of deepest blue. Straight before them, still wrapt in deepest shadow, stood the rugged mountain-wall of the “country beyond Jordan,” and above it the coloured splendours of the

saalem immediately after bathing. He was therefore restricted to taking part in the worship of the small and uncomfortable village meeting-house, and he foresaw that the villagers would timidly keep at a distance from him. Besides, he had little prospect of profitably disposing of the produce of his little place so long as it was known that his house was an hospital. All this, however, he did and bore willingly ; for, while he was a strict observer of the Law, the Divine word, "I desired mercy and not sacrifice,"³⁵ was an heirloom of his family. And Jose? As for him, everything which he did for Benjamin was no sacrifice, but a great joy. He was inwardly dead to the law of ordinances, and lived and moved in the one law of love. He loved Benjamin too much rather than too little ; loved him in his need of help more than ever ; and had a daily struggle to keep his affection for him in due subordination to the love of Jesus.

Simeon's cottage made a pleasant impression. It lay peaceful and solitary to the left of the

scattered group of houses which formed the village of Bethany, on a little knoll, surrounded by fruit-trees, fig-trees for the most part. At the back there was a small garden, with a cistern. Simeon occupied the lower part of the house to the right of the door: two cows and a number of goats had their quarters on the left. On a stone seat to the right of the door stood some flower-pots. An outside flight of steps conducted to the upper floor³⁶—to the little room which had been hospitably arranged for Benjamin, first by Jose, and, after the arrival of the articles sent by Beruria, more fully by Simeon. It had not been occupied since Simeon had lost his own family. What assistance he required was rendered by a friend's daughter, who had been playmate of his own child, early taken from him.

During the latter half of the journey, Benjamin had become more and more absorbed, and the cheerfulness with which he now and then made answer was evidently assumed. He was so weak when they arrived that Simeon

lifted him down from the mule. He wished to carry him up the steps, but Benjamin did not consent to this. On getting upstairs, Benjamin signified his gratitude to Jose and Simeon only by a smile.

Pointing to a shelf, Jose said : " I have placed there a copy of the Book of Job ; our rabbis, although they deny the unclean person every enjoyment, are yet humane enough to grant him the Word of God, with which to refresh himself in holy awe." ⁸⁷

" Thank you," said Benjamin.

Taking hold of his hand, Jose continued : " Here is your bed. It ought properly to be inclined toward the ground like the couch of a mourner,⁸⁸ but the words addressed to the daughter of Zion by the prophet Micah apply to you : ' Now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field ; there shalt thou be delivered ; there the Lord shall redeem thee ' ;⁸⁹—you do not need to mourn. Now make yourself comfortable, and lie down : but first tell me, what shall I say to your

mother? For I must now hasten back to Jerusalem."

"Say to her," was the reply, "that I am in good hands; and tell her, if she is coming to see me, not to come till after the first Sabbath in Sivan." ⁴⁰

The feeling that he should in the first instance get worse led him to make this request. He did not wish his mother to receive a shock.

He did become gradually worse. The white spots "deeper than the skin" increased in number. Those on the eye and on the inner surface of the hand became less easy to bear. The hair of his head came out, and on the "scalls" which formed on the head the baneful "yellow thin" hairs showed themselves. The leprosy was still in its first stage, but was laying hold of him with an unusual combination of its malignant symptoms. The scaly rash burned, and his whole body was feverish and became gradually weaker. With his excessive love of cleanliness, he became loathsome to himself.

He was forbidden to wash his face;⁴¹ and although he might have washed his hands, the scab on the inner surface of one of them rendered that impossible. He was, moreover, inwardly tormented by the question, in what way he had merited all this suffering. When he asked himself what reply Jose would give to the question, he compared him to Job's friends, who sought to make him out a sinner suffering for his sins, while in truth he was none. "And yet," he said to himself, "did not the sickness commence on the day on which I denied Jose and his Jesus before Schelamzi? Yes, Schelamzi is proud and intolerant, but that is not her true character." He continued to feed the hidden flame, although he acknowledged that it could only cause him painful unrest.

At times, however, he started up and exclaimed, "I must give her up, I will give her up!" Once he threw himself with such violence on his face that Simeon hurried upstairs in time to hear the words: "O Jesus! O Jesus! if Thou be the Messiah of God, if Thou be

God, tear the veil from my eyes, that I may discern Thee!"

"Mar Benjamin," inquired Simeon, "what is the matter?"

"I am the man," he answered in the words of Jeremiah,⁴² "that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath."

"Do not say that," Simeon replied; "this is the chastisement of love, as it was with Job, of whom our wise men say that he served God from love, and love only."⁴³

"Yes, if I could do that; but I love the creature more than God," he exclaimed, striking himself on the forehead.

Simeon, growing angry in the ardour of his sympathizing love, replied: "Then cast your zelem (idol) from you, and be free, and joyful, and whole."

The words rung in Benjamin's ears as the solution of the riddle.

All through this trying time Jose came daily, sometimes twice a day, to Bethany. He was the medium of communication between mother

and son, and sometimes fetched medicines and advice from Rab Ami. When crossing any of the markets, he generally selected something he thought would afford pleasure to his friend—fine wheaten bread, or prunes⁴⁴ from Damascus, or very sweet figs, or a bouquet of red or white malicha roses.⁴⁵ He visited him twice a day at first : afterwards he came indeed twice, but one of the times only to inquire of his uncle how Benjamin was progressing. He had hoped to be more with his friend and nearer to him than ever, but the reality was far from corresponding to his delightful anticipations. Benjamin seldom requited him with a friendly word. He was for the most part absorbed in himself, and occasionally even repelling. When asked how he was, he gave the answer, which was no answer, "He was getting on well : " and when Jose wished to perform the duties of a nurse, he thanked him, but declined the offer, instead of gratefully accepting it.

It often appeared to Jose that he regarded him as the disturber of his happiness. It was,

however, impossible to have a frank explanation. Benjamin's condition demanded forbearance. Jose had from the first made up his mind not to speak to him about Christianity; he wished to avoid all appearance of turning the seclusion of the sojourn in the country to account in the interests of proselytism. Benjamin's sufferings, and his behaviour under them, caused him unspeakable mental pain, and many a time he determined not to visit him so often. Beruria, however, was grateful for the service which he rendered to her son; and Benjamin himself, in consenting to remove to Beth-Hini, had reposed a confidence in him which it was his part to show was not misplaced. He came, therefore, to the sufferer at least once every day, and exercised himself in love which, even when it meets with no response, is true to itself; it seeks not its own, but in loving responds to the love of the Lord.

CHAPTER V.

INWARD AND OUTWARD RESTORATION.

IN the unsocial state of mind into which Benjamin had been brought by his severe and prolonged mental conflict, he was not at all sorry that Jose remained one day away ; nor did he give the matter any particular thought when he failed to appear at the usual hour on the second day. It was not, however, without uneasiness that he looked for him on the third ; and he asked himself whether he might not have driven him away by his cold and reserved behaviour. When this day too passed without his obtaining a sight of him, his uneasiness increased to an agony of self-reproach, which drove all other thoughts into the background.

Old Simeon had also become too accustomed to Jose's daily visits not to feel uncomfortable

at his remaining away ; and on the evening of the third day, when it was now too late to expect him, he said to Benjamin,—

“What can have happened to my nephew ?”

“It is my blame,” exclaimed Benjamin, “that he has given over coming ; it is a punishment for the ingratitude with which I have requited his affection.”

Simeon shook his head.

“Yes, it is,” Benjamin continued. “I have often known him modestly withdraw when by my caprice I have brought him into a position in which he could seem to be obtruding himself.”

“You mistake him, however, this time,” replied Simeon. “I am glad to hear that even with a son of Boëthus he does not throw himself away : but he never forsakes a sick friend, even if that friend put on a face ten times as morose as you may have done.”

“Why then does he not come ?” asked Benjamin.

“I do not know,” was the reply ; “and I.

am anxious about him. He is either ill, or some other insurmountable obstacle has come in the way."

"Oh! then do go down to the city," exclaimed Benjamin. "Perhaps he is ill; and who should be to blame for that but me, the unclean, who has occasioned him so much trouble?"

"Let us wait till to-morrow," said Simeon. "I hope he will come himself to-morrow, and solve the riddle for us."

The next day was spent by them both in painful and fruitless waiting. Jose did not come. In order to understand why he did not, we must transfer ourselves to the house of Menahem.

All cheerfulness had forsaken this family from the time of Benjamin's taking ill. Although Benjamin was not as yet her acknowledged suitor, Schelamzi had become so attached to him that the separation was insupportable to her. Her longing preyed day and night on the bloom and strength of her young

life. It was in vain that she sought to deaden it by picturing to herself the disfigurement which the frightful malady must have wrought on the object of her affections. The aversion which by this means she sought to call forth was immediately swallowed up in sympathy, which only fanned the flame of her love, and by lending an ethical sanction to mere natural feeling, transformed and exalted its character.

Her cheerfulness, which at other times, like the sunshine, shed life through the house, had given place to melancholy, which she sought to hide from her parents, but could not. Formerly talkative, she was now taciturn; in place of overflowing with fun and wit, she had become grave; and naturally fond of company, she was now absorbed in her own thoughts, and preferred to be alone. The solicitude with which she caused inquiries to be made regarding Benjamin's condition left no doubt as to the cause of her distress. It was she who induced her father to place one of his country houses at Beruria's disposal, as an asylum for the patient

When this offer was declined, and the triumph of her love with which her imagination had been occupying itself was frustrated, she was seized with convulsions, and not only passed sleepless nights herself, but disturbed the rest of her parents by her ceaseless lamentation and sobbing. After it became known that under Jose's guidance Benjamin had moved to Bethany, she fell into a condition bordering on madness. The thought that Benjamin was in Jose's hands, and had been wrested from her, sent a glow of jealousy streaming through all her veins ; and—what seemed to her a necessary consequence—the thought of Benjamin's yielding to the seduction to apostatize from the faith of his fathers transmuted her anger against Jose into a dire hate, such as only a woman can contract and foster when her feelings have passed from the control of her reason and understanding, and have blinded her to the claims of the moral sense.

Rab Ami sought in vain to subdue her excitement of mind and body by means of lower-

ing remedies, internal and external ; neither vinegar nor milk of almonds, neither crocus-ointment¹ nor fomentations of a decoction of white roses,² were of any avail. How was it possible ? The malady had its seat in the heart ; its cause was to be sought in circumstances which it appeared impossible to alter.

Rab Ami then tried what he could do by means of entreaty and of scolding.

“O daughter of noble parents!” he exclaimed, losing patience, “why have you become a suicide ? Why do you, whose hand is sought by hundreds, fix your heart on this one, the least worthy of them all ? Either he will die, or he will become a m̃n. Give him up, for however it may turn out, he is lost to you.”

“No,” she replied. “If he were dead, he should not be lost to me. He should still be accessible to me. I could visit his grave, I could speak to him in spirit, I should be at liberty to wear mourning for him. But that this Jose should have erected a wall between him and me ; that he is now nearer to him than

miraculously rescued to the Church by the wise and gracious counsel of God. "Herod the king," mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, is Herod II., Agrippa. So little did this monarch come behind his grandfather in his imitation of heathen customs, that on one occasion, in the amphitheatre of Berytos, he caused the performance of a spectacle *en masse* of fourteen hundred criminals, who, divided into two cohorts of seven hundred men, fought in mortal combat with each other.⁴ None the less, however, did he set a high value on being considered a strict observer of the Jewish law. When he was in Jerusalem in the year 43 or 44 A.D.,⁵ he showed his zeal for the law in the violent measures by which he sought to suppress while still in embryo the young but extending community of the disciples of Jesus. His strictness increased when he saw that he was bringing himself into favour alike with the party of the Pharisees, and with that of the Sadducees, and that he was earning the applause of the populace, who hated these

Nazarenes, or, as they were also called, these Capernàitic nondescripts. Although by nature no cruel despot, he became one in this instance for the glory of God and for his own glory.

The number of Christian believers, however, was so great that it was impossible to inflict punishment on them all. The king committed to the Sanhedrim the task of instituting proceedings against the leaders. Jose was not one of these ; and Menahem also spared him for this reason amongst others, that by placing Jose on the list of the proscribed he should have broken off the intimacy between Benjamin and Schelamzi. Now, however, that he saw his family happiness destroyed, and the life of the child he fondly loved endangered through Jose, he no sooner set foot within the stone chamber of the Temple in which the Sanhedrim held its meetings, than he broke forth (previous to the commencement of the sitting) into imprecations on Jose, and gave notice of his intention to impeach him. Every one applauded.

"At last," exclaimed a certain Akabya, "I begin to feel confidence in our Ab-beth-din again! I was afraid he was himself inclining to the left."

The members of the Sanhedrim, seventy-one in number when all assembled, sat in a semicircle, the Nasi (president) in the centre, and on his right the Ab-beth-din (vice-president). Right and left of the semicircle stood the clerks and the officers. The candidates from whose number vacancies in the council were filled up, occupied several rows of seats in front. They were for the most part men of distinction, belonging to the priestly order, and were permitted on occasion to speak in favour of the accused, but not against him. When Menahem with unmistakable vehemence accused Jose of being a fanatical and proselyting sectary, one of the younger candidates pleaded his cause—in his heart, if not in words. He did so for Benjamin's sake, whom he knew too well to believe that Jose, his friend, could be so bad as Menahem represented him. Imme-

diately after the sitting was concluded, he caused a hint to be conveyed to Jose to seek some place of safety.

During the next few days Jose concealed himself, first in the house of one Christian family, and then in that of another. In the night between the second and third day he stole into Beruria's house, having previously sent her a few lines to announce his coming. Beruria felt strangely when standing thus secretly face to face with a follower of Jesus as his confidante. She was too noble-minded to be afraid of informers; but brought thus close to Christianity in the person of one of its representatives, she was afraid of herself.

"Your duty to yourself and to your uncle," she said, "requires you to leave Jerusalem for a time, in order to preserve your freedom and your life."

"But my duty to Benjamin," Jose replied, "requires me to remain, even if I should expiate it with my life."

The contention between those two noble

hearts lasted a long time, and all that Jose was able to wring from the mother of his friend was her consent that early on the following day he should go to Bethany once more, to confer with Benjamin and with his uncle, and then decide what he should do.

Disguising himself as well as he could, he took the most retired way out of the city. After crossing the Kidron, he turned aside from the direct road to Bethany, and proceeded to make for that village by climbing the ridge of the mount diagonally, scrambling rather than walking. When he emerged at the summit, at the point where Bethany becomes visible, two Roman soldiers, who had been lying in wait, stopped him and demanded his name. He could not tell a lie, and answered them, "My name is Jose."

They declared him their prisoner, and an hour later, before the morning dawned, he had disappeared behind the walls of the castle of Antonia, in whose cells many of his fellow-disciples and fellow-sufferers were already pining.

Menahem was soon informed that they had not lain in ambush for Jose in vain. He rejoiced to have it in his power to appease his daughter, whose melancholy was unabated. But how was he mistaken ! Schelamzi received the information in silence. Her countenance brightened for a moment, and then gradually assumed a deeper gloom than before.

When old Simeon came to the city and inquired for his nephew in the Christian families with which Jose associated, he learned that only a day or two previously he had been concealing himself in their houses, but that he had not returned since the evening before last. Seeing that Menahem had impeached him in the Sanhedrim because of his religious zeal, the probability was that he had been taken prisoner. He then went to Beruria. When she heard that Jose was expiating his faithful, self-denying love for her child, in prison, she wept bitterly : but when Simeon, who, with his native candour kept nothing back, informed her that it was Menahem

whom Jose had to thank for it, she broke forth angrily :—

“I always thought, and indeed made no secret of it from Benjamin, that no good would come to him from this family. His illness dates from an evening spent there, and now from the same quarter he sustains the loss of his faithful nurse.”

“Make your mind easy,” said Simeon. “The uncle knows as well as the nephew that love is better than sacrifice.”

“Yes, I know quite well,” replied Beruria, “that you are as well disposed to my child as Jose. But how is Benjamin,? What does he think about Jose?”

“Benjamin, up to this time, is no worse, but neither is he any better. He does not yet know what has happened, but Jose’s remaining away certainly makes him uneasy. He is afraid that he has infected him, and that his friend has taken ill himself. What am I to say to him?”

“Tell him, by all means,” replied Beruria.

"that Jose is not ill, but has been imprisoned. Do not mention, however, who has been the cause of his imprisonment."

"Why am I not to tell him that?" Simeon inquired.

"The truth is," Beruria continued, "he loves Menahem's daughter; and it might cause him too great a shock if he were to hear that Jose's misfortune was traceable to that family. Besides, we do not know whether Schelamzi is aware of this shameful act of her father, and herself has any share in it."

"That is true," said Simeon; "but there would be no harm if this were to be the means of shattering his idol."

"You may be right," Beruria rejoined; "but let us leave that to the Holy One,—blessed is He! Tell Benjamin, however, that his mother will try to make up to him for the loss of Jose. I am coming out now in a few days. Iyar is nearly ended, and Benjamin himself begged me to come after the first Sabbath of Sivan.

I mean to comply with his wish. Tell him I shall be there at the appointed time."

When Simeon re-entered Benjamin's room, the latter received him with the exclamation, "You come alone!"

"Yes, my son; but Jose is not sick."

"Then does he feel offended at my ingratitude, and for that reason does not come?"

"As I told you already, you little know him if you think him capable of taking offence at a sick friend."

"Keep me no longer in suspense, Mar Simeon. What has happened to my friend?"

When Simeon disclosed the truth, and said, "Jose has disappeared, and has probably been imprisoned," Benjamin remained for a long time motionless, as if he had been killed by the shock; then the tears started from under his half-closed eyes, and in a complaining tone he asked, "Who has brought this upon him—upon me?"

Simeon answered, not without perceptible embarrassment, "How am I to tell? He is,

we know, a disciple of Jesus ; and King Agrippa, passionately devoted to the theatre, and to the circus, thinks that in order to pass for a true son of Israel he must show himself an enemy and persecutor of the disciples of Jesus. O son of Boëthus ! if you only knew how they have been hunting the Nazarenes down there since you came to Bethany ! It may be they are assembling criminals to provide the people once more with that delight of pagan eyes, a huge bath of blood. Those Edomites eat no blood of beast, since that is forbidden by the law ; but all the more do they thirst after the blood of men." Simeon's voice trembled with rage as he uttered these words.

"Hush, hush !" Benjamin exclaimed. "The Scripture says, 'Curse not the king, no not in thy thought.'⁶ How could King Agrippa do that if there were not those urging him on who seek to win his favour by acting the part of informers, or use him as their murderous tool in the service of their own fanaticism or

revenge? Was it only yesterday that Jose became Jesu's disciple? How does it happen that he is seized just at this time when he is interesting himself in me?"

Simeon was silent.

Benjamin continued: "It is not love to Jesus the Nazarene alone, it is also love for me, that has brought him into prison. Those who think by that means to render Jose's faith repugnant to me are mistaken; nor will they succeed in attaching me more closely to themselves."

"God be gracious unto thee, my son!" I had almost forgotten that you may expect a visit from your mother in the first week of Sivan. How sympathizingly she spoke of Jose! O Benjamin, you have a good, noble mother. But now, compose yourself. I am going for the present, and I will take care that your mother will be pleased when she comes to us."

It might have been expected that the thought of the catastrophe which had befallen his friend

would have aggravated Benjamin's condition. Such was not the case. On the contrary, he became from this time perceptibly calmer; that laceration of spirit whose outward manifestations he had not been able to conceal, gradually gave place to a subdued sadness, and a calmer and more composed state of feeling. He recognised where the fetters that bound his friend had been forged, and from that moment the idol of his heart was broken in pieces. Jose little dreamed when he was being led into prison that he was thereby delivering his friend out of the prison-house, and yet from this time the latter breathed the air of freedom.

"'My soul,'" he secretly exulted, "'is escaped, as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and I am escaped.'" ⁸ The conviction frequently flashed through his mind that the root of the disease had been removed. The fact that the glow of passion had been extinguished, and that the more exclusively his thoughts now dwelt on Jose the less he

was occupied with himself, exerted a beneficial influence on the state of his body. When he thought of Jose, he must needs at the same time think of Jesus. The recollection of the conversations under the terebinth tree, and in Gethsemane ; of Jose's prayer with or rather for him, on the height between Jerusalem and Bethlehem ; and of his prophetic word, more than once repeated, "You shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord ;"—all these recollections came vividly up before him, and he put the question to himself how he should now reply to his friend if he were to live it all over with him once more.

A few days after Simeon's return, Benjamin expressed the wish to attend the synagogue on the following Sabbath. On Simeon's objecting that it was not fitted up for the reception of lepers, Benjamin pressed him to have this done, and said that he would be responsible for the necessary expense.

A rabinnical enactment said : "When a leper is to enter a synagogue, they shall make a

partition ten handbreadths high and four cubits square ; and let him be the first to enter, and the last to depart." ⁹ When we consider the universal dread of contagion which prevailed at this time, and the high degree of ceremonial uncleanness attaching to leprosy, we must acknowledge that it was of itself a humane act to allow the patient access to the house of God at all. How great, however, must have been his feeling of shame ? What pain must he have experienced when taking part in the service, enclosed in this wooden box, and meeting the curious and at the same time uneasy gaze of those who were more afraid of him than pitied him, as one suffering punishment at the hands of God !

It had become a necessity to Benjamin to offer up prayer in the house of God for himself, and also in especial manner for Jose. It was evident, moreover, from the decided way in which he gave expression to his wish, without pausing to inquire how far it was a practicable one, that new life was beginning to stir within

him. When Simeon had given the village carpenter the order for the mechiza (the name of the partition already described), there was scarcely any other topic of conversation in Bethany than this, that the distinguished young mezora (leper) in Simeon's house was to attend the synagogue on the following Sabbath. The synagogue was a small meeting-house; and it did not require to be large, seeing that whenever they found it possible, the villagers went down to Jerusalem before the commencement of the Sabbath, in order to celebrate the sacred day in the Temple or in one of the city synagogues, of which there were several hundreds.¹⁰ On this occasion, however, it might be taken for granted that every one who was not obliged to spend the Sabbath in Jerusalem would remain in the village. Why did Benjamin, who could not be ignorant of the power of curiosity, not allow himself to be turned aside from his purpose to attend the synagogue? We do not think we are wrong in assuming that he was too deeply engrossed

of the donor pressed it to **his** forehead. He opened it, and his eye lighted **on the** words of Elihu : "If there be a messenger with **him**, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness : then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit ; I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's : he shall return to the days of his youth."¹¹ "Has not the All-merciful," he said, half aloud to himself, "sent me such a good angel in Jose ? It is strange that, now he is farther than ever from me, I feel myself nearer to this Jose than ever ! The faith for which he is suffering in prison must be truer than the faith which thinks it is acting rightly in placing him in fetters as a criminal." As he said this, he seemed as one who had long wandered in a dark thick forest and suddenly sees the light stealing through the branches. He was standing, as it were, on the boundary between two worlds ; and a hand seemed to be stretching towards him from the clouds to lift him out of the night,

was more still and devout than usual, and the precentor's delivery was peculiarly solemn.

The office of precentor, or leader, in the little community, was held by a friend of Simeon, the father of that Martha who was accustomed to go back and forward to Simeon's house, and who had often told her father how distinguished and pious a young man Benjamin was, and how cordial were his relations with Simeon's nephew. Samuel—such was the precentor's name—was a baker by trade, and was one of those, as in truth Simeon himself was, who, in part at least, under the influence of impressions left by the visits of Jesus to the village, and by His miracle of raising the dead, conceded the possibility that Jesus might be the Messiah, but who, in order to escape the cross, wilfully avoided a recognition of the reality of His claims. Benjamin's presence at the service, however, not only touched his tender heart, but also awoke his slumbering conscience. The congregation had never heard him chant the Schemone-Esre (the prayer of the eighteen benedictions) as he did

and do not waver persecute the believers unto blood." Thoughts like these coursed through his mind, and when at the words: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who causest a horn of salvation to bud," Samuel's trembling became less marked, he said to himself, not without a shaking of his own voice, "Who *hast caused* a horn of salvation to bud." Seldom raising his head, he prayed, always half audibly, now for himself, the leper, and for his afflicted mother; now for Jose, the prisoner for Jesu's sake and on his account; but most of all he sought light from above on the great question which had long been agitating his soul. He joined in all the prayers of the congregation, but converted them into the expression of his own personal wants. When the room was quite empty, he stretched himself on the floor in the direction of the chest which in the synagogue represents the "holy of holies," his forehead touching the ground, and his hands raised above his head. The concluding words, "I wait for Thy salvation, O Lord," after the recital of which the

spirit the chest in which was deposited the roll of the Thora parted in twain. The Thora shone in the purple of the breaking day. The auroral purple melted into the dazzling splendour of the meridian sun, from whose midst the risen One stepped forth, the crown of shame upon His brow transformed into a wreath of gold with thorns of diamonds. He came towards the mechiza, whose wooden framework fell to pieces at His approach. Pointing with the finger of His left hand to the name of Benjamin, which gleamed in silver light on His high-priestly breast-plate, He spread His right hand over the prostrate one. From this right hand there streamed down upon him as it were a dripping rain, which first caused Benjamin to shudder, and then filled his inmost being with blissful quickening. All this was the work of a moment. Benjamin remained prostrate on the ground for some time, and then rose and exclaimed:

“Mine eyes have seen the King in His beauty. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my

"Mar Benjamin!" exclaimed Simeon, "what has happened to you? Your eyes are once more open, and your eyelids have become white—that is a sign that you are clean; how comes it that you have so wonderfully recovered?"

A decided change had, indeed, taken place in his physical condition. We have not been silent with regard to the means by which this inward and outward revolution was accomplished, and do not need the vision of the risen One for its explanation. Benjamin is not the first, however, in ancient or in modern times, to whom the exalted Christ has vouchsafed such a view of the reality and the riches of His glory.

Benjamin's recovery was thus coincident with his spiritual second birth. The eyelids became white, and the leprous spots assumed a darker hue and gradually disappeared, leaving white hairs behind them, which, however, were no longer in the centre of the Bahereth (spots), and therefore were no signs of uncleanness. The burning sore on the hand became crusted

I am lost for ever to God and to you. I shall be an object of horror for ever before God and His holy angels. O father, forgive me for leading you astray. I implore you, by the love you bear me, beg his release from King Agrippa ; rid me of this worm which gnaws at my heart ; rescue me from despair."

Tearing her hair and rending her clothes, she threw herself on the ground, and would not allow them to remove her to her couch.

"No, no ! I do not deserve that any one should interest himself in me. I am a child of death. God is a righteous Judge."

All attempts to calm her failed of their effect, and when they said to her that Jose deserved no better fate, she exclaimed :—

"No, no ! he is more righteous than we all."

Menahem at length said to her, "Calm yourself, then ; Jose is once more free."

Seeing the salutary change his words wrought in her despairing grief, he actually went to the king and obtained Jose's release.

Schelamzi, on a subsequent evening, left the

"That shall be done at the proper time," Beruria answered.

Schelamzi thanked her, and hid her face on her shoulder. After remaining in this position for some time, weeping and sobbing, she withdrew, crushed in spirit, but comforted by the generous feelings which Beruria had displayed.

The season of the feast of Schabuoth was now approaching. Jose was at first doubtful of the reality of his release, and kept himself concealed in the houses of his fellow-believers. When Beruria came to Bethany on the Wednesday before the feast, she heard of the change which had taken place in Benjamin. She resigned herself to it, however, with less opposition when her son advanced to receive her almost restored to health, and Jose's prophetic word had thus found its fulfilment. When she informed him that Jose was once more at liberty, he clapped his hands with joy, and went hopping round his mother, embracing and kissing her time after time. In the meantime Jose himself arrived. He had suffered in prison

only for the congregation, but also for the individual, for which stated times were set apart.³ And although there was as yet no Talmud, a beginning had been made in that training from early youth to habits of intellectual work and of independent research which laid the foundation of the astounding productiveness of the Jewish people. The study of the Holy Scriptures, to which all other learning was made subservient, was regarded as a religious duty and an act of worship, and, so far as it consisted in simple reading and reflection, was not only permissible on the Sabbath, but was the occupation of all others befitting that day. The aristocracy of learning took precedence even in those days of that of birth and property.

The Sacred Scriptures had acquired a new attraction for Benjamin: he sought and found in them that One who had sought and found him. More at home hitherto in the Thora than in the prophets, he preferred now to occupy himself with the writings of those heralds of a new covenant. He read them as one who had

and pryingly towards it. One evening, as they were going through the village along the Jericho road, they heard whispered behind them, "Look at the apostates" (abreyanim);⁴ and when they had passed the house of the leader, Samuel, who gave them a friendly greeting, an evil-disposed person, with the purpose of mocking them and Samuel, ventured on the wanton jest to call after the two, "Jose meshitcha wa-chamâreh" (Jose the Messiah and his ass).⁵ Occurrences like these induced the friends to remain as retired as possible.

About eight days after Beruria's return, when they went into the garden after dinner to have an hour's chat under the shade of the ivy,⁶ Benjamin found on the table a surprise awaiting him, in the shape of a dainty bird-cage made of twigs of hazelwood, in which a pair of lively sparrows were hopping to and fro.

"There they are," said Jose, laying his arm on Benjamin's shoulder,— "the favoured ones whom I have thought worthy to render you a two-fold service."

‘In the days of the Messiah all sacrifices shall cease, except the sacrifice of thanksgiving?’”⁹

“I am in perfect earnest,” was Jose’s reply. “During all the time our Lord Jesus walked the earth, not a word was heard from His lips to indicate that He absolved those who believed on Him from the observance of the Law. He was an opponent of the Pharisees, but only of their self-righteousness, of their hypocrisy, of their darkness. It is quite possible that the shadows of the law shall not continue for ever : but they still continue, by God’s appointment, and are binding on you as on me as long as the Temple with its altar of burnt-offering and its priesthood continues. Indeed, it is in an especial manner binding on you, provided you wish to be an obedient disciple of Jesus ; for it is certainly handed down to us that He was wont to say to the lepers whom He healed, ‘Go, show yourselves unto the priests, and offer the gift which Moses commanded.’ On one occasion He put ten to the test by this means. They went, did as he had told them, and were cleansed.”

turning, said, "I prefer to leave you alone: go in peace."

A northerly winding in the road soon withdrew them from his sight.

Benjamin had in his right hand a nosegay of blue hyssop, bordered with jessamine and carnations, given him by Simeon. Jose carried in his left a bird-cage, the bars of which he had interwoven with leafy twigs of the fig-tree, and under his arm an unused earthen vessel (phiala).¹⁰

"When we came up here," Benjamin began, after a long silence, "it was a glorious sunny day, and now it is so sunless and cloudy that one sees nothing at all of the blue sky."

"That, too, has its meaning. We were then ascending to that Bethany whence our Lord, after He had blessed His disciples, was carried into heaven:¹¹ to-day we are going down to the city where He was crucified. Your path at that time conducted from the valley of chastisement and of doubt to the luminous heights of spiritual and bodily restoration: to-day it

the Sinaitic. We shall cast away the rind of the pomegranate, and refresh ourselves with the fruit. The Psalmist had a glimpse of it when he said, 'The Lord looseth the prisoners.'"¹³

It is not difficult to understand how thoughts such as these should at this time have taken hold of Benjamin. The explanation is to be sought in the character of his mind, yet not in that alone; the whole course of his life had been preparing him for the recognition to which he attained in his conversion—that the law, with its exactions so painfully ceremonial, limited in their main features to what is outward and national, could not be the ultimate expression of the will of God. The opposing tendencies, later known as Petrinism and Paulinism, were already working in these two men. One in principle and in aim, they yet so diverged in their ideas as to the paths by which this aim was to be reached, that it required all the strength of warm affection and of self-denying humility to preserve their fellowship unbroken.

had to be gone through from which Benjamin's sensitive mind naturally recoiled.

When they reached Gethsemane, Jose took the hyssop from his friend and went on before. Benjamin entered the garden and sat down there for a little, thinking of all that had taken place. He pressed his forehead against the ground on which Jesus had knelt,¹⁶ and prayed : "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean : wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Hearing over the garden wall the voices of passers-by, he sprang to his feet, and his face coming in contact with the olive branches, he repeated to himself the verse of the psalm : "I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God : I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever."¹⁷ He then straightened out the dark grey pallium which he had thrown over him in the morning, so that but little of the white tunic was visible underneath, and drew the former with his right hand over his head, leaving only his eyes free. Thus attired, he advanced along the road between the western

"Then there fails only the water," replied Chananja.

"That is also here," said one of the servants, pointing to an elegant marble jug. "I have just fetched it from Siloah."

"Good, very good. Now take the table and carry it out in front of the tent, on the side next the hill, and put everything in order upon it: and you, Mar Benjamin, who seem to me healthier and brighter than I have ever seen you, follow me, that we may do according to the holy law of God."

Chananja took up his position between the table and the tent, and told Benjamin to place himself on his right hand; the others were at liberty to look on from a short distance. He took the marble jug, and poured into the earthen vessel just so much water as seemed requisite for the intended mixture. Then taking one of the sparrows, he slew it over the water, and assisting by pressure with his hand, allowed the blood of the tiny victim to drop into the water till the latter had become of a

The life-blood propitiates, water cleanses, hyssop and cedar-wood strengthen, crimson refreshes, and with the bird that has escaped and does not return your ailment has wholly fled. And now," he continued, "follow me into the tent, that we may proceed to fulfil the most trying of the commands relating to cleansing."

Entering along with him, the priest drew the razor from his girdle, and commenced by removing the hair from his head and the still tender growth on lip and chin. He then told him to undress. Observing Benjamin grow pale, he laid his hand on his bald head, and said :

"It is a good sign, my son, when a man has a feeling of modesty; but true modesty²¹ is that which is felt most of all in the presence of God, and he who loves God will also say, 'Consider how I love Thy precepts.'²² Let us make haste."

Scarcely half an hour elapsed before Jose saw the priest making his way back to the city.

royal gardens, irrigated by the waters of Siloah ; and before you reached them, near to where the most southerly gardens of the present Silwân village lie, was a bathing-house erected by a vegetable gardener, who had hit upon the happy idea of using the waters of Siloah, which flowed gently and patiently past, to supply a covered swimming-bath (mikwa).

While Jose went forward to the royal gardens, Benjamin, having paid the appointed charge, entered with his servant into this bathing-house, laid aside his shoes and his turban, and, taking off his clothes, washed them with his own hands. He then descended, dipped under the water, and rubbed himself over. Stepping out again, he put on the new clothes with the assistance of the servant, who took charge of the wet ones.

When he came out of the bathing-house, and had dismissed the servant, he proceeded to the royal gardens to seek Jose. They were not long in finding one another. Jose wished to grasp his friend's hand, but Benjamin

CHAPTER VII.

VISITS TO JAMES.

"AFTER that," it is said in the Book of Leviticus¹ of the leper that is to be cleansed, "he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days."

A brisk controversy sprang up with regard to this passage between the two Talmide Chachamim (disciples of the sages) while they rested in the Hinnom valley.

"You can visit your dear mother this afternoon without any scruple," Jose observed. "The words of the law only forbid him that is to be cleansed to settle down in his home, and in point of fact apply only to married persons."

"I beg to differ from you," replied Benjamin. "In the text there is not the trace of a distinction between married and unmarried. It

and here let us part to-day, but in hopes of seeing one another sooner and in different circumstances from then. It is fitting that you see your mother alone. I shall expect you afterwards in my cell, which is large enough for us two ; and when evening service is over in the Temple, I will conduct you to James, the head of the elders of Jerusalem,⁶ who has already heard of you, and wishes to see you."

"Agreed," said Benjamin. "But you will not be angry should I not come so soon as you perhaps expect?"

"If only you do come," Jose replied, and quickly disappeared into the adjoining street.

Benjamin, on the contrary, advanced very slowly. This spot, where a month and a half ago he had parted from Jose, was associated in his mind with a long chain of momentous events, all of which now came vividly up before him. Every object which met his eye had for him the charm of novelty. As often as from a fresh eminence he obtained an uninterrupted view he stood still, and time after time turned

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the child; the crisis through which he had passed had ripened his character and made him independent: while Christianity still lay between them, not indeed as a wall of separation, but still as something which had not yet adjusted itself to their relations as mother and son. She was rather pleased than sorry that he did not seek to enter the house, as she had in that the most direct and strongest proof that he had not broken with the law of his fathers. As they sat together on the stone seat under the archway, and she recognised in what he told her the firmness and joyousness of his conviction, and in the manner of his telling it the continuation unimpaired of his love and confidence, she was satisfied to see him happy, and not alienated from herself; and at the prospect of his now coming once a day at least to ask for her, and of his being entirely restored to her at the expiration of a week, there stole over her heart a calm, blissful repose.

The shortest way to get into the country

Immanuel,—may He be my watchword! I will witness for Him by word, and pen, and deed, in life and in death."

When he came to Jose, he had completed the transition. He appeared to his friend a different man.

"Why, how altered you are!" Jose said to him, after they had conversed for a little. "So much a child before, and now so manly. You have greatly grown: indeed, you have grown away from me. Up to this time I have led you like a child, and played with you as with a child: but I should now be ashamed to put on fatherly airs with you; I should be afraid of wounding your self-respect. You are of age, you are free; you have become yourself, and I may act the part of schoolmaster no longer."

James was at that time at the head of the "sacred congregation"⁷ of Christian believers in Jerusalem. This James is not to be confounded with James, the son of Zebedee, who but

is called by the Jewish historian Josephus "a brother of the so-called Christ,"⁹ and was therefore one of the four brothers of Jesus whose names are cited in the Gospels, and who, after they became believers, were mentioned along with the apostles, but were nevertheless distinguished from the twelve.¹⁰ Whether these four were properly brothers or, as after the manner of the Old Testament the term brother might be understood, cousins of Jesus, is a question which cannot be determined with convincing force of argument either one way or another. When the Nazarenes in astonishment exclaimed, "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?"—real or at least half brothers and sisters seem to be meant: but still the possibility is not excluded that cousins are intended. As a matter of fact, the earliest Church historian, Hegesippus, affirms with the greatest

James, to whom Benjamin was this evening to be introduced, was not an apostle, and yet was a man held in apostolic regard. He was nearly related to Jesus, and had been brought up with him in Nazareth : and we have the testimony of the New Testament Scriptures and of Hegesippus to the fact that the family of Joseph, from which the wonder-working grace of God raised up the Messiah of Israel, was allowed without dispute to be descended from David. It was that James who was known as the Just and the Protection of the people (choma-le-am),¹³ and whose manner of life is minutely described to us by the earliest ecclesiastical historian, himself a Hebrew Christian. He was holy from his mother's womb—that is, a life-long Nazarite (nezîr ôlam), and accordingly drank no wine or strong drink, and “there came no razor on his head.” That was not all : he ate nothing that hath life, that is, no flesh of a slaughtered animal, did not anoint himself with oil, and refrained from bathing in running water,—extended in fact over the whole of his

licity ; and James himself, highly esteemed and even revered as he was, well knew that he should not die a natural death any more than his apostolic namesake and companion in the faith, who had but recently been beheaded. For the same reason the room was not brightly lighted : the lustre which the Church had provided for the assembly room of its presbytery contained ten lamps,³⁰ but only three of them were burning. Behind the semicircle of elders were several additional chairs, allotted to those who were unable to stand : the rest of the assembly stood,—a dense crowd extending backwards far into the entrance hall of the house,—men of all ages, but poor for the most part in their outward appearance.

Observing the overcrowded state of the room, Jose said : “Brethren, allow us to pass ; my friend desires to be introduced to our presbyter.”³¹

All eyes were directed towards the stranger, up to this time unobserved, who followed Jose and with a bow and a smile thanked those who

I am not a Samaritan, but only a half Alexandrian: I will live and die for the Lord Jesus, who has approved himself to me as the Messiah of God."

Jose made a sign to his friend, and they stepped back into the crowd.

Benjamin was now relieved from the mental strain which had been induced by this first meeting with James, and was at liberty attentively to observe the man of whom he had heard so much. The long hair of the Nazarite was not visible: for over the unbleached linen sindon, he wore a blue upper garment of cotton, wrapped about him in such a manner as to hide the back of the head and the forehead, while the zizith (fringes) hung down on either side. The face immediately recalled to Benjamin the vision he had had in Bethany. Heaven shone forth from this face also, while at the same time it reminded of the vale of tears on earth. The beard was long and almost as uncombed as that of a mourner, the cheeks much sunken, the complexion pale, the profile of a pronounced

it seems to me very uncertain what the original words were. Altogether, it is a pity that your Master has left no writings behind Him.' He then caused me some embarrassment by asking, 'Why did Jesus write nothing?' I got out of the difficulty by inquiring in return, 'Have you anywhere read in the books of the prophets that the Messiah would leave writings behind Him?' By this means I got rid of my interrogator, as the conversation then took another turn: but the question has continued to haunt me, and as you have granted permission, I now address it to you, who are better able to furnish an answer than I."

James had looked straight before him during this narration, while his fingers kept playing with one of the tassels on the fringe of his upper garment. He sat motionless for some time after the question was proposed, and then turning a kindly eye on the questioner, thus broke the breathless silence:—

"Your rejoinder, my brother, was quite warranted, for, in truth, the prophets everywhere

objection, let us, brethren, examine the difference between the law of Sinai and the law of which Isaiah prophesies : ' Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' The law of Sinai was written on stone and on parchment, in order that it might confront us as a power outside of us demanding our obedience : the law out of Zion is the perfect law, the law become an inward principle, the law of liberty.²⁴ It is the law of which Jeremiah²⁵ prophesies : ' Behold, the days come saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah : not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt ; because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their mind and write them in their hearts. . . . ' The law which sets before us life and death

secrated, even as the covenant of the law of Moses was consecrated by blood, as it is said,²⁶ 'Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you concerning all these words.' He wrote no book, but the word of truth which He proclaimed He has subscribed with His blood, and having appeared to us²⁷ after He rose from the dead, hath written it in our hearts by His Spirit. When he walked our earth in the humble guise of a Galilean darschan²⁸ (preacher), He had much to say which his contemporaries and even His disciples were not able to understand or to bear, but it would have been opposed to the plan of God's working to commit it to writing, seeing that in the counsel of the All-Merciful, and according to the promise of our Lord, the Holy Ghost was to come upon the disciples, and especially upon the chosen twelve, and unlock to them the mysteries of the kingdom. When we put all this together, we understand why Jesus, the Messiah of the God of Jacob, wrote nothing with His own hand. Only once do we learn

faith a living faith through works of love. And now," he continued, rising from his chair, and those who were seated in front of him rising with him, "go in peace! The Lord bless you, and cause the face of His Anointed to shine upon you. May He bless the believers in Jesus in this place, and in all places where they dwell. Peace be upon Israel!"

As he spoke these words and stretched out his hand, his tall figure towered above the assembly. All present bent their heads, as children bend their heads when their father blesses them. The presbyter who had proposed the question was the first to intone the "Amen, amen!" It was repeated by many voices, and as the sound softly died away the meeting broke up as noiselessly as possible.

"That was a rich feast," exclaimed Benjamin, when he was once more alone with his friend, "such as I have never enjoyed before!"

"Yes," said Jose; "that is an Israelite indeed. The new Thora and the old Thora are united in him as mind and soul; his life is an embodi-

Job rejects the resurrection of the dead,³³ so that the Sadducees are at liberty to cite him in favour of their doctrines. James denied this, and commended the patience of Job, and the victory he obtained over outward and inward temptation, with the same fervour which breathes in a passage of the epistle which he subsequently wrote.³³

As Benjamin during his illness had entered deeply into the spirit of the Book of Job, he drank in every word spoken by the venerable teacher, and many questions rose to his lips: but he knew that he had to be silent, for he was a novice in the assembly, had not yet received the seal of Christian baptism, and besides, was still in a condition of ceremonial uncleanness.

On the third evening, however, he made Jose his spokesman.

"They call this James," he said to Jose early in the morning, "the Lord's brother; his youth was therefore coincident with that of the Lord, and was spent in near proximity to Him.

means and powers of mind which we employed in its performance fade step by step from our consciousness. When a new world dawns upon our horizon, the old one is gradually obscured. When the sun has arisen, we forget in its presence the forms and the colour of the morning sky which announced its approach. In like manner there is present to my mind only that Jesus who offered Himself on the wood of the cross, and who appeared to me after His death as the living One ; who, no longer visible to us, is with God in heaven, and shall come again in glory. The period of his activity in Galilee has left many a scene indelibly engraven on my mind, many an undying word in my heart : but the Nazareth days have disappeared. I could not write an account of them if I would. They lie behind me, not as if I had lived, but as if I had dreamed them ; and in truth I was more asleep than awake, more blind than seeing. In the years of immaturity I had neither the faculty of observation nor an independent

desire Him,' was applicable to us His blinded brethren, as it is to our misguided nation. 'There was no beauty in Him,' as the world counts beauty: but when He was sleeping, you seemed to have before you one in a trance, or who was transfigured—we avoided the sight rather than sought for it. He who looked into his large eyes seemed to be looking into the eternal world; and those on whom these large eyes were turned were penetrated by their gaze, as if the most secret things could not escape them; for this reason, his glance was to us painful, indeed intolerable. He was full of dignity in his bearing as a king's son: we regarded Him on this account as proud, and yet beggar children, the lowest and most despised, were those with whom He most of all loved to associate. Rude boys, particularly the sons of the rich, persecuted Him with nicknames, which pierced His very soul; and sometimes they surrounded Him, and pointing their fingers at Him and laughing, said, 'See, He is not in the least like a Jewish child.' And we let

awaited His return home. We, on the contrary (it almost was so), were as estranged from him as Jacob's sons from their brother Joseph: we regarded Him with aversion, as one who wished to be peculiar, and we looked upon Him as a dreamer.

"Questions of this nature are therefore painful to me; they remind me of the neglect and of the sins of my youth, and they demand from me what it is impossible for me to grant: for at the time when I had it in my power to watch the rod of Jesse in its budding and in its bloom I was spiritually blind, and the little which I did perceive with my outward senses has, since I attained to faith, entirely faded in presence of the light of our glorified Lord Jesus Christ.³⁵ The question, however, as framed and introduced by you, Mar Jose—he here raised his eyes and looked at the person he was addressing—was so modest and delicate that I was unable all at once to put it from me."

James now rose, and going towards Jose, continued:—

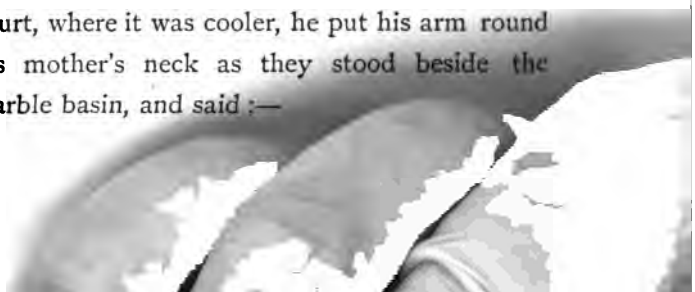
is, a meeting-house, or rather only a meeting-room—of their own. But Benjamin had not yet been received into the Church, and it was besides advisable that he should first of all have completed the ceremonial of his cleansing.

fidential intercourse of the family hearth found here, notwithstanding the humble rank of the people, most pleasing and profitable satisfaction. In his daily visits to his mother his conversation overflowed with touching descriptions of the fellowship of the Christians, and with a wealth of communications regarding the new discoveries he had made, which, with his discriminating powers of observation and ready utterance, he was so admirably qualified to reproduce.

The seventh day arrived with unlooked for rapidity and was an unpleasant surprise, seeing that it dragged him out of the new world which had risen upon him back into the old. Once more—this time alone, by his own express wish—he descended into the vale of Kidron, in order to subject himself a second time, in the tent, to the razor of the priest Chananja. Once more, accompanied by a servant, he proceeded to the swimming-bath near the royal gardens. After he had bathed, he arrived at the second stage in his cleansing ; his touch was no longer defil-

was nothing said that day about the future. Beruria simply kept him narrating, and all her thoughts were evidently revolving around the great religious question.

After they had sat a long time beside one another, they went through the house. Everything had been cleaned and put in order in the study: but the Holy Scriptures and the "Universal History" of Nicholas of Damascus—which that author had written at the request of Herod the Great—were lying open, just as Benjamin had left them to go the excursion with Jose. They went upstairs to the room in the upper storey where he had lain sick, and where to-day, for the first time, he was once more to sleep as convalescent. They stepped out upon the terrace, and he solaced himself with the glorious prospect, and greeted the Mount of Olives, with Bethany nestling in its bosom. After they had descended into the court, where it was cooler, he put his arm round his mother's neck as they stood beside the marble basin, and said:—



shall be a quarter hin of oil to every tenth, altogether three-quarters of a hin, or nine logs³ of oil, and in addition, one log of oil by itself. This one log ought to be exactly measured. Your affection would gladly measure it out much more bountifully, but the law⁴ in this point makes no difference between rich and poor. The poor dare not give less than the rich, and the rich not more than the poor."

Next day—it was the eighth after the performance of the rite with the two birds—as the priest who was appointed to watch the break of day called out from the Temple pinnacle at the sight of the first rays of the sun, "It lightens,"⁵ and in reply to the question, "Has the whole eastern sky reddened as far as Hebron?" gave the signal by his "Yes" to prepare the morning sacrifice, Benjamin was also standing on the terrace of his house. The shrill sound of the priestly trumpets, which was as the ringing of the morning bells for the city below, had awoke him, and he had risen, his heart telling him that this day was one of

a bridegroom. When he was ready to start, he called the servants, and said to them :—

“ I depend upon your being in the outer court of the Temple before the conclusion of the morning service, with the animals for sacrifice and the meat offering and the oil. Take your place in front of the middle gate in the northern chel wall,⁷ in order that when it comes to my turn you may be on the spot.”

It was now, according to our mode of calculation, about six o'clock in the morning. In the Temple the lamb for the morning sacrifice lay already on the marble table, cut in pieces and seasoned with salt : the accompanying meat offering was also prepared ; and the drink offering, inseparable from the latter, stood in readiness in a costly vessel. This had all been done shortly before sunrise. And now that the sun had risen, and the golden vine which hung over the gate of the holy place was reflecting with dazzling brightness the first rays of the morning, the parts of the thamid (or daily sacrifice) were borne with orderly step up to the

on Friday, the Ninety-third ; on Sabbath, the Ninety-second. The liturgical service concluded with the blessing of the priest. This was also accompanied by music, and when the priest pronounced the tetragrammaton יהוה the music waxed louder, as if to absorb the mystic name of God and withdraw it from unhallowed ears.

Benjamin was not yet at liberty to mingle with the worshipping congregation ; his cleansing not having been completed nor atonement made for him, he could not enter the court of the men. He was anxious, however, not to be late in arriving at the Temple. On his way thither, as had been arranged between them, he called for his friend Jose. It was his desire, by going and returning in the company of his friend, to testify to-day in an especial manner before all men that he was not fulfilling the requirements of the divine law without at the same time believing in Jesus as the Christ of God.

They proceeded towards the Xystus, and

Fifteen steps led up from the court of the women to this Nicanor or Agrippa Gate. The gateway was thirty cubits high and thirty wide, and had gigantic folding-doors. It was the largest of all the gates of the Temple—larger, indeed, than the outer gate, situated in a direct line with this one to the eastward, which was that most frequently used, and which, as being made of Corinthian brass, was called “Beautiful.”¹⁴

The Agrippa Gate was still more richly ornamented than the Corinthian, and was loaded with massive artistic decorations in gold and silver. Benjamin passed through the gateway, fifty cubits in length, and halted at its western threshold : as still requiring atonement to be made for him, he dared not tread the azâra of Israel (the court of the men) ; and, on the other hand, the propitiatory blood might not be brought to any point beyond the bounds of this azâra, as it was believed that it would thereby be desecrated, and rendered of no avail.

hands (semícha); this was done by placing both hands firmly upon it, and thereby confessing his guilt and designating this offering for its expiation. The animal was now led to the northern place of slaughter, and two priests caught up the blood of the slain lamb. The assisting priest held a vessel underneath, out of which he then poured the blood over the side of the altar (the so-called *zeríka*): the "priest that made clean" allowed the blood to flow into his right hand, and poured it from that into his left hand.

With this hand filled with blood he went towards Benjamin to perform the sprinkling (*nethina*). Benjamin bent his head forward beyond the threshold of the gate, and the priest put of the blood of the trespass offering on the tips of his ears with the forefinger of the right hand: he stretched his right hand across, and the priest put of the blood upon his thumb: he extended his right foot, and the priest put of the blood on his great toe. The ceremony was intended to denote that thereby the ear

was to be cleansed." The officiating priest took of the oil into his left hand, and with the forefinger of his right hand put it on the same parts of Benjamin's body on which he had put of the blood of the trespass offering—the tip of the right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the great toe of his right foot. The remnant of the oil that was in his hand he poured on Benjamin's head, and thus was concluded the first act of atonement—the making of reparation for the compulsory neglect for so long a time of the duties incumbent on one of God's chosen people.

The procedure with the blood of the trespass offering was followed by the presentation of its fat upon the altar.

Reconciled through the blood, Benjamin could now enter the azâra of Israel, and from there pass into the azâra of the priests,¹⁶ in order to perform the rite of laying his hands on the sin offering, which consisted in a ewe lamb. The sin offering was slain on the north side of the altar. The priest received the blood

The meat offering formed the close, and consisted in this instance not of one but of three-tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil.¹⁷ The meat offering is a gift pleading for the blessing of God. The three-tenth deals were intended to denote that the healed leper in beginning a new life stood in need in a treble measure of the divine blessing.

Everything in this ritual had its reason and its meaning: but the learning of the scribes of those days, far from inquiring into the ideas which were embodied in it, was occupied exclusively with the externals of the celebration, and with the casuistical questions to which these gave rise. One who had entered into the meaning of the profound saying of Jesus, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," must have felt that he had broken with these material offerings, and especially with the sacrifices of blood, which converted the Temple into a slaughter-house and a butcher's stall, and which, in so far as they did not come upon

Benjamin stood still, and said solemnly,—
“This Temple will become the prey of Roman legions ; for it has outlived its day.”

Jose made answer :—“Jochanan Ben-Zakkai, the pupil of Hillel, when the gates on one occasion opened of their own accord, exclaimed : ‘ Temple, Temple, why dost thou frighten us ? We know that at the last thou shalt be destroyed ; for it is said, “ Open, Lebanon, thy gates, and let fire devour thy cedars.” ’ ”¹⁹ But not alone Rabban Jochanan : our Lord Jesus has also foretold it ; but He affirmed at the same time that ‘ not one jot or tittle of the law should pass till all be fulfilled.’ ”

Benjamin remained silent. As they crossed the Xystus terrace, the crowd assembled there scanned them with curious eyes.

“ See there, the wolf with the lamb ! ” whispered one.

“ They are coming from the Temple,” observed another, as if to induce silence.

“ What has the minuth (the heresy of the Christians) to do with the Temple ? ” called a third.

CHAPTER IX.

REMOVAL TO ALEXANDRIA, AND THE FRIEND'S LAST SERVICE.

DURING the festive meal Beruria took no part in the conversation beyond what was necessary or appropriate to her position as hostess ; she remained chiefly a listener and silent observer. At the conclusion of the "grace after meat,"¹ in repeating which Jose laid especial emphasis on the passage referring to the lady of the house, and on that referring to the Messiah, she observed :—

"I will now leave you to yourselves : but soon after the mincha prayer, when it has become cooler, I shall expect you in the bower upstairs, and I have some important communications to make to you."

The words set Benjamin a thinking, and he asked :—

"Is it with regard to my question in

ments and had retired, Beruria opened the conversation by saying :—

“My first communication will afford you pleasure. It is unnatural that a mother should be of a different faith from her only and her dearly-loved child. However much they loved one another, they would still be separated in spirit ; their relation to one another would lack that which is its highest consecration. It is on this account that, since the change has taken place in Benjamin, I have not ceased to pray, and to search whether Jesus really be the Messiah, or whether we should look for another : and I have tested the new faith by its fruits, to see whether it really inwardly renews those in whom it is operative, and makes them better and happier men. To-day I am able joyfully to acknowledge that the Holy One (blessed is He!) has by His Word and Spirit, and through your example, overcome my unbelief. You, Jose, have shown me that Christianity is a religion of self-renouncing love : and I have seen in Benjamin that it is a religion of the

will say to me, 'Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge.' My resolution is taken; I am going to Alexandria."

When she had said this, Jose broke forth: "Is it possible, lady, that you are going to that rabble nest, where quite lately our people were so wantonly persecuted with fire and sword and other cruelties?"³

Benjamin, who was less excited, asked: "But why leave Jerusalem, where we have both attained to the knowledge of salvation?"

"Allow me then," continued Beruria, with impressive calmness and firmness, "to tell you the reasons which have determined me: and let reasons have more weight than feelings. I do not deny that ever since I became a widow my heart has felt drawn to Alexandria, but I do not allow my heart to decide. It is not, however, a mere accident that just at this time aged Alexandrian relatives of my late husband have addressed to me a more urgent appeal than ever before to go and settle there along with Benjamin, in whose line the family of

which has been sown has not yet sprung up. But do we not, even when far away, remain the children of the Church of Jerusalem, the mother of all Christian believers? If God forces this isolation upon us, will not His love have wise purposes in it? It will be hard for Benjamin to make the new faith accord with the old Temple worship; you know him in this respect still better than I. Here, in Jerusalem, as time goes on, this inward conflict would become more acute, and might even—which God prevent—threaten to disturb your friendship: a residence beyond the limits of the land of Israel⁵ will be beneficial to Benjamin, his mental and spiritual development will go forward more quietly and securely. The school of Philo, the Alexandrian, will also be better suited and more helpful for the completing of those studies which it is his purpose to devote to the service of the Church of Christ. Besides, it has all along appeared to me to be full of significance that tender bonds, which seemed likely to tie us to Jerusalem, should have been torn asunder by God Himself."

her decision were so much after his own heart that they compelled his assent. He now rose and said :—

“Yes, mother, if we do not deny Him whom we have found ! For this very reason we dare not leave Jerusalem without having confessed the Lord more decidedly than we have yet done. I have undergone three baptisms,⁷ required by the law of Moses and by the commandment of the Rabbis: it is time that I submit myself to the baptism of Christ, in order that it may make me not only in body but also in soul a new creature,⁸ and unite me for ever with the God of the New Testament, with the Son of God, and with the Spirit of God. Without this seal on my forehead, this fountain of life in my heart, I will not withdraw from Jerusalem.”

“Are you wont, my son,” Beruria replied, “to see your mother stop half-way when she has recognised what the will of God is ? I will also beg to be accounted worthy to be received into the Church of Christ through the mystery of

in his life. Although their paths now separated, their friendship contained within itself the pledge of its continuance ; what they had lived through together could not be forgotten.

The evening's conversation occasioned a disturbance in the feelings of the three to one another which could only gradually find its readjustment. None of them stood quite in the same relation to the others as before. On the side of Beruria and of Benjamin the parting with Jose was friendly ; indeed, unusually so, but not so unconstrained as it used to be. Jose felt embarrassed. When Beruria and Benjamin requested him to use what influence he possessed that they might soon be admitted to Christian baptism (at that time it was not imperative that they should remain for a lengthened period as catechumens), he gladly promised to do so. But with how mingled feelings did he listen to an appeal which, had this day passed without its concluding act, would have filled him with rejoicing !

* * * *

launched forth in praise of his pupil, whose whole bearing he described as that of one renewed in the image of the Lord.

Benjamin sued for her hand, and her parents gave their consent, recognising in the course events had taken the overruling hand of God. Not every marriage is made in heaven, but this one truly was so. Those who had loved only for this world, and had lost one another, found one another again after they had found the Lord, and had found heaven in Him.

Although the Jews regarded marriage as a duty, Jose remained unmarried. He thought that there must also be some who receive as addressed to them the words of the Lord regarding abstaining from marriage for the kingdom of heaven's sake. In so doing he had the example of James the Just,⁹ and of the great apostle of the Gentiles, who, some time previous to this, had passed through the school of Gamaliel. He had tasted what love is, both in its sweetness and in its bitterness, in his friendship for Benjamin: and he honoured the married

species of leprosy with which Benjamin was seized was *lepra anæsthetica* (not *tuberculosa*).

2. Ibid. ix. 3.
3. Jeremiah vi. 14.
4. Gittin 70^a.
5. An euphemistic name for leprosy.
6. This was the opinion of the Rabbi Joshua ben-Lakisch, Kethuboth 77^b.
7. Kethuboth, *ibid.* (Raathân, a special form of leprosy.)
8. Schabbath 55^a.
9. Bathra 17^a.
10. Eleven sins according to Tanchuma, Parascha מצורע.
11. Numbers xii. Comp. Deuteronomy xxiv. 9.
12. מצורע = שם רע (one who brings forth an evil report). The name of leper is thus explained throughout in the Talmud and Midrash; and for this reason Bachja in his interpretation of the passage in the Thora referring to leprosy takes as motto Proverbs xviii. 20.
13. Negaim i. 4.
14. Ibid. ii. 2.
15. A meal consisting of offerings, of which the priests could partake only in the Temple, and not at home with their families.
16. Tanchuma, Parasche מצורע.
17. החלוי, the Hung = the Crucified.

ath, x. 6, 8. Nor did it apply to men without any exception, Megilla i. 7.

3. Moëd katan 5^a.

4. Ibid. 15^a.

5. Ibid. 14^a.

6. 2 Kings xv. 5. Comp. 2 Chronicles xxvi. 21, where the Targum reads: "he (Uzziah) sat in the house of leprosy (בבית סגירותא)." Comp. Levy, Chald. Lex., under קִנִּיר.

7. Matthew xxvi. 6. Mark xiv. 3.

8. See Lightfoot on Luke xvii. 12.

9. Pesachim 67^a. Zebachim 117^a.

10. קָרָר, owner of a carrus (carrum), *i.e.* a small four-wheeled waggon. Mezia vi. 1.

11. Psalm lxxx. 2.

12. טָלִית (Pers.-Arabic tailasân), name of the upper garment or mantle; called also מַקְטָרִין (amictorium) or פִּילִיוֹן (pallium).

13. Zechariah xiii. 1; in Beracha form (form of a benediction).

14. בְּתֵל מַעֲרִבִי.

15. Biesenthal, in an old book in the Heidenheim library, found נַצְרַת mockingly interpreted as נַצְרֶתָה (נַצְרֶתָה), "afflicted with leprosy."

16. A Semitic name for the rising sun.

17. אֵילָתָא דְּשַׁחַר is not the dawn itself, but the horn-like first rays which precede the dawn. ["Upon Aijeleth Shahar, on the hind of the dawn" (the title

3. It is open to question whether the interpretation is correct ; but, at all events, it is not an invention of ours.

4. The Jewish Christians were called by this name.

5. A Jose with the surname Meshicha does appear in the history of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Bereshith Rabba, cap. 66.

6. נטולי דחצבא, Pesachim 111^b.

7. Psalm cxxiv. 7.

8. Horajoth ii^a.

9. Schöttgen, Horæ, p. 1005.

10. נגאִים, Negaïm xiv. 1.

11. Luke xxiv. 50.

12. See the Midrashim on Psalm cxlvi. 7.

13. Leviticus xiv. 8, 9.

14. Sota 16^a ; but comp. Rashi on Negaïm ii. 4.

15. Negaïm xiv. 4.

16. Luke xxii. 41.

17. Psalm li. 7 ; lii. 8.

18. Negaïm xiv. 6.

19. Maimonides, Hilchoth zaraath xi. 8.

20. Leviticus xiv. 7. Comp. Maimonides, Hilchoth zaraath xi. 1.

21. A current proverb. Dukes, Rabbin. Blumenlese, no. 86.

22. Psalm cxix. 159.

23. Baruch malbîsch 'arummim. See jer. Berachoth ix. 3.

28. Frankel, *Introd. in Talmud Hierosolymitanum* 51^b. The name is עובר גלילאה (a wandering Galilean), *Sanhedrin* 70^a, *Chullin* 27^b.

29. *John* viii. 6-8; probably from the Gospel according to the Hebrews.

30. *James* ii. 8.

31. *James* v. 20. *Comp. Isaiah xxxviii. 17* (marg. read.).

32. *Bathra* 16^a.

33. *James* v. 11. *Comp. Schemoth rabba*, cap. 31.

34. The words of *James* in *Eusebius* ii. 23.

35. *James* ii. 1.

36. *James* ii. 2; *Acts* i. 13.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. *Nega'im* xiv. 3.

2. שוק העליון, a name applied to that part of Jerusalem situated on Zion.

3. 1 log = $\frac{1}{12}$ hin; 3 logs = $\frac{1}{4}$ hin; 9 logs = $\frac{3}{4}$ hin.

4. *Leviticus* xiv. 10. *Comp. v. 21 seq.*, according to which one-tenth deal of fine flour suffices "if he be poor," and instead of three lambs, one lamb and two pigeons.

5. ברקאי, *Joma* iii. 1; or, according to the reading of the *Jerus. Talmud*, ביוקי.

6. Von Baudissin, *Translationis antiquæ bibri Jobi quæ supersunt*.

17. Comp. Numbers xv. 4.
18. Isaiah xl. 31.
19. Joma 39^b, jer. Joma vi. 3. Lebanon is an emblematic name of the Temple.

CHAPTER IX.

1. ברכת המזון.
2. After the death of the Emperor Tiberius (A.D. 37), under Flaccus Avillius, the abject slave of the Emperor Caius Caligula (A.D. 37-41); Philo's work, "Legatio ad Caium," is connected with these persecutions of the Alexandrian Jews.
3. Romans xv. 25, 26.
4. Acts ii. 10; comp. xviii. 24.
5. חוצה לארץ, "outside the land," sacrifice and the rites peculiar to the Temple have no place.
6. Josephus, Antiq., xix. 5.
7. טבילות.
8. ברית חרשה.
9. James is not one of those brethren of the Lord who, according to 1 Corinthians ix. 5, led about a Christian sister as wife on their missionary journeys.

THE END.